Exploring Youth Athletes Preferred Leadership Styles and Behaviours of Sport Coaches

Matthew Ragogna, BSM

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Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

St. Catharines, Ontario

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I love you all.

Abstract

A coach holds responsibility as a parent does at home, or a teacher in the classroom. The consideration of young athletes' preferences of their coach can aid in the development of life skills, positive development, and retention of youth in sport; which are only some of the outcomes and benefits from experiences gained throughout sport programs (Carson & Gould, 2010). Previous research has mainly focused on high school aged athletes (14+). However, the highest rates of sport participation, variety, and dropout are found at younger ages (Canadian Heritage, 2013). This research was designed to address this gap. One hundred and sixteen (86 female, 49 male) youth sport athletes (age range 10-14 years) across 19 different sports completed a modified *Leadership for Sports Scale (LSS)* questionnaire. The *LSS* assesses five factors of preferred coach behaviour - Positive Feedback, Teaching and Instruction, Autocratic Behaviour, Democratic Behaviour, and Social Support. Furthermore, seventeen athletes (11 Boys, 6 Girls, *M(age)*= 11.65) participated in semi-structured interviews using the *Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale* (CBAS). Results showed that there was no significant difference between genders on preferences, and no relationship between preferences and age. There was a significant difference between sport type where individual sport had a significantly higher preference for Democratic Behaviour than team sport athletes ($t_{(114)} = 2.72$, $p < .01$). Themes from interviews were categorized and suggest numerous behaviours regarding responses to performance, mistakes, misbehaviour, social support, and coaching gender that coaches can additionally implement in their practices; while findings from data add new content to pre-existing literature.

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Chapter One: Literature Review

The *Athletic Triangle* describes the relationship between coaches, athletes, and parents that can help foster a positive environment; something that has been appealing to sport sociologists and psychologists over the past decades (Martin, Jackson, Richardson, & Weiller, 1999). The concept is based on the *Educational Triangle*, (i.e., teacher, parent, and child) which focuses on maximizing performance and relationships of all parties in an educational setting.

The triangle suggests numerous relationships throughout interactions, communication(s), and behaviours of those, including: parent(s) and coach(es) expectations of each other, parent(s) and athlete(s) expectations of one another, and lastly, coach(es) and athlete(s) expectation of each other. Parents are expected to attend as many games as possible, support their child(ren), and work with coaches to follow guidelines and parental codes of conduct. Coaches are expected to develop practice and competition strategies while fostering the 'true' motivations of sport for their athletes; while promoting the concept to parents of equal treatment, grow and maturity of their child(ren), as well as notifications to any schedule changes and equipment upgrades (Holden, Forester, Keshock, & Pugh, 2015). The actions, decisions, and behaviours of coaches underlines the importance of the atmosphere created to meet the satisfaction of an athlete's basic psychological needs (Álvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2009). Players want to be appreciated, respected, and acknowledged when they do something right by their coach (in their respective sport); and in return, can help with resolving conflicts between all parties and trust between one another. Holden, Forester, Keshock, and Pugh (2015) concluded that while all parties are important to an athlete's success,

coaches ultimately hold the largest role when involved in youth sport due to their impact, their investment in the athlete(s), and the skills they teach regardless of the score. Lastly, coaches can strongly influence the quality of the overall sport experience by setting goals, conveying personal attitudes and values, and making the most of interactions with each athlete. The overall connection and experience between coach(es) and athlete(s) can have positive effects on the levels of participation with children and, in the larger context, youth sport (Smith, Smoll, & Cumming, 2007).

Youth participation in physical activity at this age (10-14) is essential to promote healthy living, the development of life and social skills, as well as develop intrinsic motivation for future physical activity. Statistics Canada (2014) detailed that the number of participants have decreased in the past two decades, specifically, for boys and girls in the age group between 11-14 (64% to 55%). Crane and Temple (2015) mention three factors to kids dropping out of sport at a young age, including: intrapersonal constraints (lack of enjoyment), interpersonal constraints (pressure from coaches and parents, social schedules), and structural constraints (time- specifically jobs, school). Another factor could be due to children starting sport specialization at an earlier age, where it has dropped much lower in the age bracket than earlier decades (ParticipACTION, 2015). In contrast to the *Long-Term Athlete Development Plan* (LTAD) – where components at the 10-14 age bracket still focus on acquiring general skills and learning how to use their physical attributes - the transitional phase for athletes is now considered when kids begin to specialize in sport (13-15) (Lloyd & Oliver, 2012). Following, the investment years (16+) begin when kids are still growing, maturing and psychologically developing (Côté, Strachan, & Fraser-Thomas, 2008). In addition, ParticipACTION (2015) has shown that

7% of dropout of youth athletes is a result of poor coaching/leadership, which, this study aims to identify what coaching behaviours can keep athletes involved. To understand what motivates children intrinsically and extrinsically to stay intrigued is just one step to keeping children active.

An athlete's preference of a coach's behaviour can affect how the coach-athlete relationship builds over the course of a month, season, and subsequent years. A coach who meets an athlete's preferences can promote healthier development and a continued desire to participate and compete in their respective sport. The *Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)* developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) laid groundwork on categories to help assess adolescents preferred coaching leadership style. Over periods of human growth, development, and innovation, youth continuously are raised and exposed to alternate styles of coaching different from a decade ago. Factors such as age, sport, coaching gender, required skill level, and cultural interpretation of sport are just some influencing indicators that youth perceive and identify with. When it comes to preferred leadership behaviour, current literature shows that a high percentage of studies have concentrated on the intercollegiate level with both high performance and varsity athletes (Mji & Surjlal, 2013; Gesualdo, 2011; Ronayne, 2004; Beam, 2001; May, Els, & Viljoen, 2014; Sharma, 2015). Similarly, studies around the world through cultural-specific popular sports have yielded similar results in terms of coaching preferences with high performance and varsity teams.

Some researchers have examined athlete's preferences in high school while very few have gone into the elementary school age bracket (Grades K-8). Additionally, most studies have specifically focused on either a team or individual sport; while the ones who

have included both have not clearly separated and identified statistical differences between the two.

1.1 Models in Youth Sport

Within youth sport, several models touch on different aspects of youth preferences, perceptions, and other intangible experiences that influence their future sport motivation, participation, and development. Multiple models have been selected and reviewed below based of previous utilizations in youth sport research and the overall direction of youth athlete preferences of their sport coaches.

1.1.1 Mediational Model of Leadership (MML).

Smith, Smoll, and Hunt (1989) created the *Mediational Model of Leadership (MML)* to observe coaching behaviours, athlete perceptions and memory of previous behaviours, as well as players' evaluative reactions (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007). The *MML* is considered a "mediational model" because of its involvement and utilization of athletes processing memories. As well, the contribution to future interventions can allow coaches to step into situations and approach scenarios in a positive manner to improve athlete experiences (Jowett & Lavallee, 2007). It provides coaches with a chance to better understand how their behaviours are interpreted and perceived, as most times coaches are unaware of how frequently they engage in different behaviours and what effect those behaviours have on their athlete(s) (Horn, 2008). The model continues to draw from interactions that take place between situational and personal factors in youth sport (Jowett & Lavallee, 2007). The *MML* has specifically focused on athlete perceptions of previous experiences and coaching actions that took place and less towards athlete preferences for future coaching behaviours.

As previously mentioned, the model is based on player recollections and evaluations of their coaches to assess their perceptions of coaching behaviour. As seen in Figure 1.0 below, coaching behaviours come from individual variables such as goals, self-recognitions, monitoring player motives, as well as age and sex of both coach and athletes. Player perceptions and recollections come from athlete factors such as athletic and general self-esteem, sex, age, and valence of coaching norms and behaviours. Lastly, player evaluation reactions are based off the situational factors and the environment that create their experiences; these include the type of

sport, number of participants, practice compared to game scenarios, as well as previous successes or failures in competition (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007).

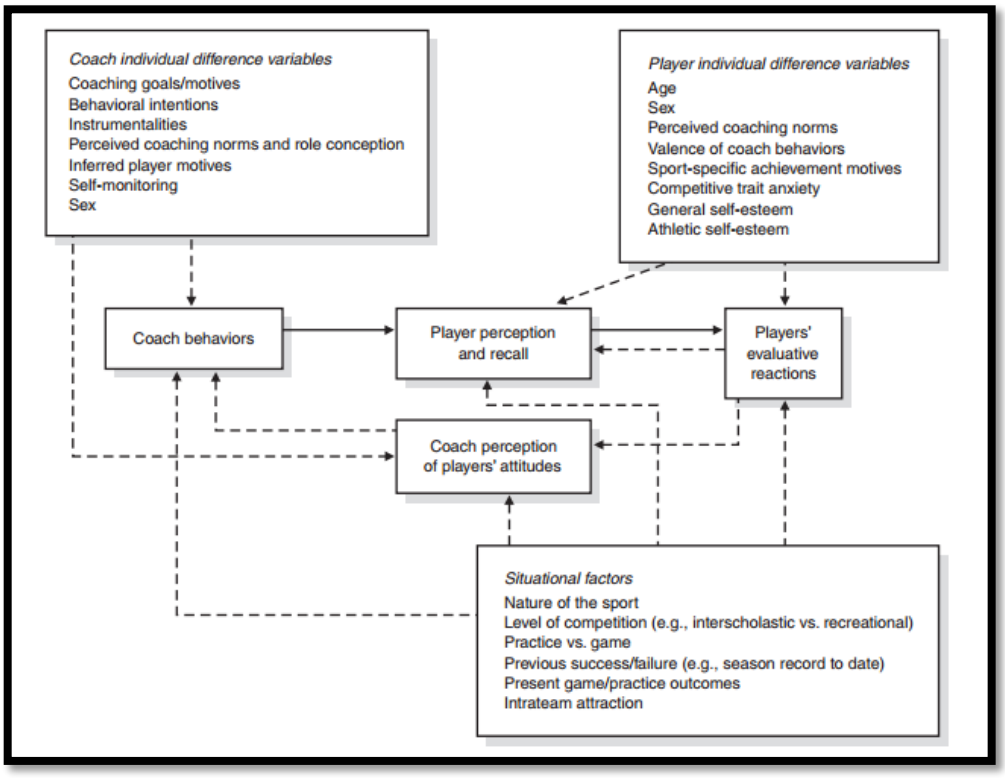


Figure 1.0 Mediational Model of Leadership (MML). Smith, Smoll, and Hunt (1989).

Overall, the *MML* shows that the relationship between coaches and athletes influence cognitive process behaviours perceived by athletes. These relationships are a result of situational factors that the athletes relate to and perceive from coaching behaviours (Horn, 2008).

1.1.2 Horn's Model of Coaching Effectiveness.

Horn (2002) developed the *Model of Coaching Effectiveness*, which helps identify coaching behaviours that result in positive outcomes such as athletic performance, enjoyment, self-esteem, and perceived ability (Boardley, Kavussanu, & Ring, 2008). The model itself is based off multiple theories, including achievement goal theory, attribution theory, competence motivation theory, the expectancy-value model, self-determination theory, self-efficacy theory, and the sport commitment model (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007).

Portions of the model align with Chelladurai's (2007) *Multidimensional Model of Sport Leadership (MDML)* in terms of situational, leadership, and personal characteristics. In Figure 1.1, Horn (2002) dissects the complex diagram in separate sections of coaching effectiveness. In section one (Boxes 1-3), sociocultural context, organizational climate, and coaches' personal characteristics influence a coaches' behaviours and their personal beliefs, characteristics, and views (Boxes 4- 5). Ensuing, athletes themselves contribute characteristics, perceptions, beliefs, and motivations (Boxes 7-10) that ultimately lead to athlete satisfaction and performance (Box 6).

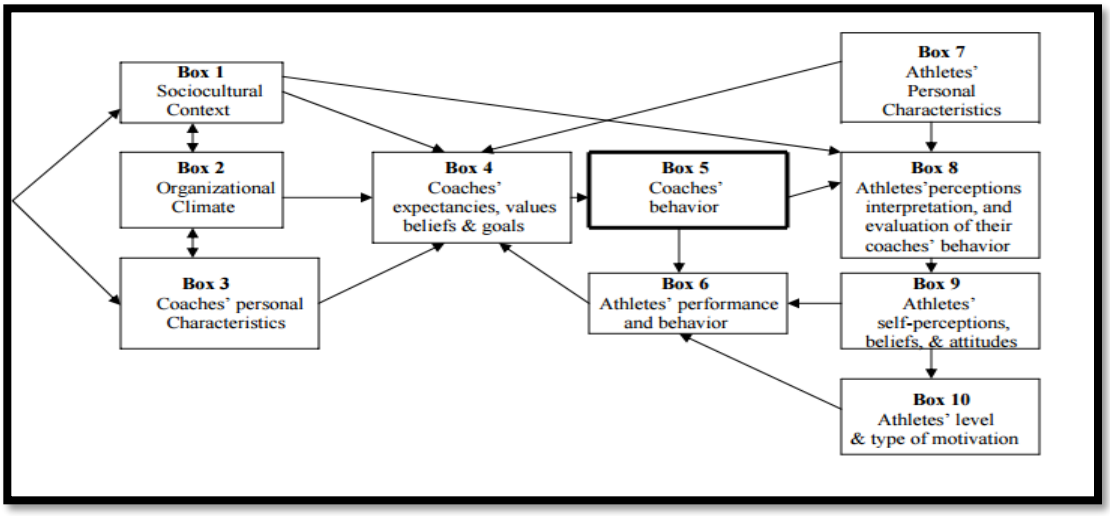


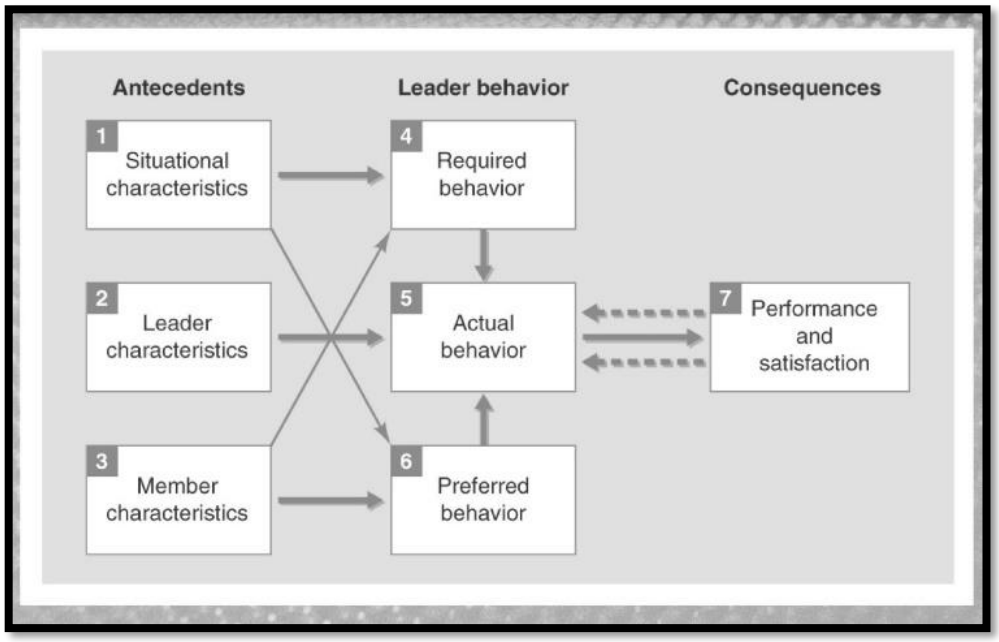
Figure 1.1. Model of Coaching Effectiveness. Horn (2002).

In terms of relationships within the model, athletes' perceptions, interpretations, and evaluation of their coaches' behaviour affect multiple parts of their sport experience(s). First, the evaluation of a coaches' behaviour could impact one's personal beliefs, motives, and attitude in potentially a positive, negative, or neutral way. Additionally, depending on the type of sport (i.e., team versus individual), level of competition (e.g., recreational, club, varsity), and gender of the player (i.e., male, female, coed), one's type of motivation towards participation and competition may differ. Consistent with other models, the overall process of a coach's behaviour directly impacts both athlete performance and perception. However, the model does not focus on athlete preference, something that shifts the general application of this model to more immediate coaching efficacy and athlete-based outcome research.

1.1.3 Multidimensional Model of Sport Leadership (MDML).

Chelladurai's (2007) *Multidimensional Model of Sport Leadership (MDML)* looks at three different types of coach leadership behaviours. A coach who recognizes and understands different athlete characteristics thus influencing their behaviour (See Figure

1.2). Situational characteristics refer to observations that are based on current surroundings. This could include the type of tasks, goal orientations, and the classification of team or individual sport. Leadership characteristics are focused on the coach themselves – what they bring to the team, their strengths, weaknesses, and their ability to develop a team based on their age and competition level. For example, the age and competition level of athletes would suggest or recommend levels of coaching actions that vary between types of sport and be considered appropriate (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007). Lastly, member characteristics focus on the athletes themselves. This includes personality, need for achievement, affiliation, and their responding behaviour based on situational characteristics.



1.2. Multidimensional Model of Sport Leadership (MDML). Chelladurai (2007).

Leader behaviours categorize types of attitude and conduct coaches end up extruding based on previous experiences. Required behaviour is based off the surrounding environment of members involved (e.g., coaches, parents, athletes).

Preferred behaviour looks at what athletes 'want' and refers to the preferences of members for instruction and guidance, social support, and feedback. Lastly, actual behaviour specifically addresses coaches' leaderships characteristics and their personality, experience, and expertise. The coach will also be influenced by both preferred and required behaviours imposed on them, causing them to adapt their coaching style to better suit organization goals and direction, parental preferences, and preferences of the athletes themselves (Wallach-Bista, 2014). The ability for coaches to adapt to different athlete traits and preferred behaviours while utilizing their strengths as a coach can foster an environment that influences member satisfaction and overall group performance (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007).

1.2 Instrumentation in Youth Sport

Multiple scales have been reviewed in conjunction with this research paper while providing the application each brings to a youth sport context. More specifically, each scale notes youth athlete preferences of their respective coaches through both leadership style(s) and coaching behaviour(s). Both have been used frequently throughout the development of youth sport research and modified to collect information from other sport parties which include parents and coaches themselves.

1.2.1 Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS).

Originally created by Cheladurai and Saleh (1980) and developed in conjunction with the *MDML,* the *Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS)* provides a 40- item questionnaire to assess athletes preferred, actual, or perceived coaching style(s), motivational

techniques, and instructional behaviour. Of the three categories, five sub-categories were generated in terms of leadership behaviour.

1. Training and Instruction is based on working to improve the potential performance of an athlete; actions such as instructing athletes in technique, skills, and tactics included.
2. Democratic Behaviour is focused on the coach's philosophy and inclusion in participation; more specifically looking at an athlete's involvement in group goals, practice methods and design, game tactics and strategies.
3. Autocratic Behaviour cites a coach who holds all authority, power, and independent decision making for the individual or the team (Cheladurai & Saleh, 1980).
4. Social Support refers to coaches' concern(s) with the interpersonal relationship with their athletes; where taking interest of other factors outside of coaching and even sport creates a positive environment.
5. Positive Feedback refers to the support, guidance, and rewarding of positive actions of athletes by coaches.

Currently, the *LSS* has been expanded and adapted to three different versions, focusing on athletes' perceptions of their coaches' leadership behaviours, preferred behaviours, as well as coaches' perception of their own behaviour (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007). Neither of these have been included in the literature review due to lack of correlation.

1.2.2 Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale (CBAS).

The *Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale (CBAS)* was developed by Smith and Smoll (1978) to observe coaching behaviours in youth sport based off their initial creation of the *MLL*. The questionnaire focuses on how frequently coaches took part in different perceived behaviours in both practice and game scenarios from adolescent athletes in team sports. The original study was conducted through an observational approach, where games and practices were monitored and coded for themes and patterns. In terms of categorization, the scale was divided into two major classes (Reactive and Spontaneous), which comprises of twelve sub-classes (See Figure 1.4). *Reactive Behaviours* are based off coaches' reactions following an action by an athlete; whether it be in response to a desirable performance or effort, mistakes/errors, or misbehaving of an athlete(s) or group (Smith, Zane, Smoll, & Coppel, 1983). Sub-classes in *Reactive Behaviours* include reinforcement, non-reinforcement, mistake-contingent encouragement, mistake-contingent technical instruction, punishment, punitive technical instruction, ignoring mistakes, and keeping control (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007). Next, *Spontaneous Behaviours* (or non-reactive) focus on behaviours that have already happened and are not directly associated with an action or event. Sub-classes in this group include general technical instruction, general encouragement, organization, and general communication.

	Class I: Reactive Behaviors
Responses to Desirable Performance	
Reinforcement	A positive, rewarding reaction, verbal or nonverbal, to a good play or good effort
Nonreinforcement	Failure to respond to good performance
Responses to Mistakes	
Mistake-contingent encouragement	Encouragement given to a player following a mistake
Mistake-contingent technical instruction	Instructing or demonstrating to a player how to correct a mistake
Punishment	A negative reaction, verbal or nonverbal, following a mistake
Punitive technical instruction	Technical instruction given in a punitive or hostile manner following a mistake
Ignoring mistakes	Failure to respond to a player mistake
Response to Misbehavior	
Keeping control	Reactions intended to restore or maintain order among team members
	Class II: Spontaneous Behaviors
Game-Related	
General technical instruction	Spontaneous instruction in the techniques and strategies of the sport (not following a mistake)
General encouragement	Spontaneous encouragement that does not follow a mistake
Organization	Administrative behavior that sets the stage for play by assigning duties, responsibilities, positions, etc.
Game-Irrelevant	
General communication	Interactions with players unrelated to the game

Figure 1.4. Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale (CBAS). Smith and Smoll (1978).

One appealing focus of the *CBAS* is its specific emphasis on youth sport coaches, something that must be adjusted or designed specifically off other primary research models. Categories in the *CBAS* have also drawn relations to Chelladurai's (1980) *LSS* model, but lack the ability to monitor verbal or non-verbal cues from coaching behaviours. Data collected and associated suggest that although from two separate theories, both the *LSS* and *CBAS* share similarities in their categories while obtaining different perspectives of preferred coaching behaviours in youth sport (Wallach-Bista, 2014; Smith, Zane, Smoll, & Coppel, 1983). Currently, the *CBAS* has expanded its types of questionnaires to include athletes and coaches themselves to evaluate and perceive coaching behaviours. The research through this scale has also allowed the development of clinics and documents for coaches to follow to better manage adapt, and adjust their practice and game behaviours (Tenenbaum & Eklund, 2007).

Within this review of current literature, categories have been used from the original *LSS* and have been considered under a larger umbrella to address all current preferences of youth athlete sport coach's leadership and behaviour styles between team and individual sports. Motivational techniques, instructional behaviour, as well as decision making styles have been used to categorize current literature on athlete preferences of coaching leadership and behaviour styles.

1.3 Coaching Preference Research

Coaching preferences have been grouped into three sections that previous research has identified to support athlete preferences of coaches within youth sport. These sections include motivational tendencies, instructional behaviour, and decision making.

1.3.1 Motivational Tendencies.

Motivational tendencies focus on coaching styles that implement uses of feedback systems and social support both in and out of the respective sport to inspire and propel athletes' participation and positive development in sport.

1.3.1.1 Positive Feedback.

Positive feedback is consistently the most preferred subscale from the *LSS* in both team and individual sports, including in comparison to athlete gender, age, competition level(s), and nationality (Sobhanzadeh, 2013). Coaches who can communicate positive feedback to an athlete can produce a stronger impact towards an individual's intrinsic motivation to continue to participate in sport (Parker et al., 2012). Minimal comparisons have been made to positive feedback similarities and differences between team and

individual sport; as the ranking of both types of sports have continuously produced high scores.

While comparing positive feedback scores between genders and age groups, females tend to prefer more positive feedback than males, but both show a decrease in preference as adolescent age increases (Pyun, Kwon, Koh, & Wang, 2010; Hastie, 1993). Corrette (2014) indicated that female athletes reported a higher frequency of praise over males as they got older when combined with information from their coaches. This would support the view that athletes of different gender and ages perceive, prefer, and respond to different types of feedback. The ability for younger athletes to collect information may hinder them at a younger age to understand and interpret positive feedback. The decreased preference of positive feedback as the age of an athlete increases could be an indication of an athlete's ability to understand that feedback in general may not always support positive interpretation. This could include the use of negative or critical feedback that may not hurt the individual's performance but may not support positive reassurance. Children at an older age (15-18) may also understand the power of challenging one another and look for their coach(es) to push them outside of their limits through providing feedback that is not positive. An athlete's ability to understand their coach's tone, volume, and other signalling factors may be different between early and late adolescent athletes in relation to the type of feedback (Martin et al., 1999; Burke & Szabo, 2013).

In terms of positive feedback related to athletic skill level, Hisataka (2015) found that perceptions of coaching behaviour and feedback differed between high and low expectancy athletes. This supports Rejeski, Darracott, and Hutslar's (1979) original

findings that high-expectancy athletes were reinforced more than low-expectancy individuals; and that high-expectancy children experienced a higher rate of non-feedback behaviours by coaches. Athletes who perceive more success as both an individual and team saw greater amounts of positive feedback, potentially representing a fulfillment of reward recognition within a group environment (Westre, 1999; Shrivastravo & Sharma, 2015; Smith, Balageur, & Duda, 2006). Additionally, more skilled athletes experienced minimal perception of negative feedback and felt they were held to higher expectations by their coaches when compared to their counterparts. Factors such as praise, communication, and limited negative feedback could translate into more successful development and enhance the coach-athlete relationship (Boixados, Cruz, Torregrosa, & Valiente, 2004; Wilson & Stephens, 2007).

Over the course of a season, positive feedback was preferred more at the beginning than the end. This could be based on the learning and early development stages adolescents would appreciate at the beginning of a season; more coaching support and healthy reinforcement (Turnman, 2003). This also indicates the importance of developing strong relationships between coach-athlete at the beginning of the season. As the relationships grow, the coach can afford to offer constructive criticism to their athlete(s) based on the amount of trust developed over the course of the season.

Athletes who made progress over the course of the season received a greater deal of reinforcement, compared to athletes' who did not transition to the next level and reported less reinforcement (Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005; Turnman, 2006). Those who also carried on longer seasons with their clubs noted that they felt a greater deal of positive energy and competent feedback (Adie, 2012). Turnman (2006) found that

athletes who were considered “non-starters” over the course of the season perceived coaches exhibiting reward power characteristics and provided those in need of more positive reinforcement with less than those more skilled.

The result also supported that high-competence perceived athletes (or starters) could show a positive response to feedback from a coach after poor performance (Hisataka, 2015). Following a good performance, both starter and non-starter athletes preferred more reinforcement after reaching success, whether through the results of competition or through personal achievement (Hassell, Sabiston, & Bloom, 2010). Only Solomon (2008) found in team sport that athletes were receiving equal positive feedback and reinforcement for athletes either starting or coming in off the bench.

1.3.1.2 Negative or No Feedback.

Although not part of the *LSS*, studies have acknowledged that negative feedback from coaches are and can be perceived by athletes. Resulting implications may be why an athlete’s preference might trend towards more of a positivist behaviour from coaches. Allen and Howe (1998) found that any feedback whatsoever (corrective, positive, or negative) from coaches towards athletes could immediately be perceived as a “failed attempt” or lack of success.

As both male and female athletes got older, they perceived a higher frequency of criticism and non-verbal criticism feedback from their coaches than when they were younger. Athletes aged 10 to 11 and 12 to 14 reported that they received similar rates of behaviour of coaches’ criticism, but once they approached older adolescent age groups (14-18), the frequency of reported criticism from their coaches increased drastically (Corrette, 2014). Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, and Power (2005) collected data from over

300 individuals from grade five to eight in over ten sports, reporting that over a third of coaches' yell or scream in an angry tone at their athletes. Considering that these athletes are still in learning stages of their early careers, the high rate of an angry imposed critique(s) may cause concern.

Athletes of all skill levels mostly expressed frustration when coaches ignored them or failed to provide feedback to an individual's contribution to the overall team (Hassell, Sabiston, & Bloom, 2010). Team sports may be more difficult for coaches to continuously provide feedback to players, as individual sports allow a coach to focus all their time and energy on one (or minimal) athlete(s) (Stein, Bloom, & Sabiston, 2012). When it came to poor performances, athletes perceived coaches providing a substantially greater quantity of feedback when they really preferred less. Allen and Howe (1998) found with female field hockey players that a lower quantity of feedback from the coaches suggested less frequent encouragement, minimal corrective information, and greater association with athlete perceived competence. This suggests that the amount of feedback in general within team sports can be perceived as beneficial, hold no impact, or cause a detriment to one's inclusion within the team. Research also suggests that the quantity of feedback may also hinder the quality perceived by the athlete, meaning that the appropriate balance of feedback is crucial to successfully communicate with an athlete.

Wilson and Stephens (2007) found that although higher expectancy athletes may continue to play in sport, low expectancy athletes who receive negative feedback and poor coaching communication often report having a poor experience and higher rate to drop out of the sport. Between both team and individual sports, coaches who lack positive

and balanced feedback skills may hinder an athlete's opportunity to grow and develop within their sport.

Overall, coaches need to identify different feedback pathways and adjust their communication styles based on the time, sport, athlete(s), and environment. The ability to realize when there are both good and bad performances can help a coach incorporate informational feedback to athletes in their post-match interactions (Stein, Bloom, & Sabiston, 2012). In a team sport, the result is meaningful given the fact that coaches often encourage their athletes to focus on the team rather than individual achievements; especially in terms of effort, development, and steps towards building a mastery climate for all athletes. Individual sport should be geared towards a greater amount of feedback pertaining to an ego and task motivation climate, where coaches reward an athlete based on both their effort and success as an individual (Turnman, 2008; Miulli & Nordin-Bates, 2011). Both negative/no feedback provided by the coach may have more of a consequential impact than perceived by non-participants (other coaches and parents). Athletes want to be rewarded for success, regardless how minimal or significant the contribution is to themselves or the team. Both team and individual sport athletes tended to see a decrease in sport motivation and eventual absence of participation; again, contributing to the declining sport participation rate.

1.3.1.3 Social Support.

Social support scores are consistently ranked fourth out of five in terms of coaching preferences on the LSS scale, however, is more valued by athletes in a team sport than those who participate in individual sports (Pyun et al., 2010).

Within a team sport, the number of athletes compared to coach(es) may play a factor in the amount of one-on-one interaction time available during practice and/or competition. Athletes who interact with their coaches and discuss topics out of the specific sport they participate in (education, hobbies, social life) appreciate the coach taking interest of their lives. Within an individual sport, athletes who (based on a smaller if not equal ratio) spend almost all their time with their coach facilitating discussion may not require the extra communication and personal support. Since there are no other athletes to compete for attention or assistance, the psychological attachment to the coach is more of a professional relationship and requires less socialization outside of sport (Pyun et al., 2010). If anything, social support was preferred at beginning of the season for an individual sport athlete when the athlete and coach were not acquainted yet (Turnman, 2003).

Males prefer social support more than females, but it was acknowledged by both males and females that one of the main goals of team sport(s) should be geared towards more of a compassionate, inclusive environment (Gardner, Shields, Bredemeier, & Bostrom, 1996; Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005). Males could also prefer more social support as the number of male coaches in youth sport is greater, providing both coach and athlete(s) a stronger comfort level and the willingness to share information, bond, and trust each other (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001). Reinboth, Duda, and Ntoumanis (2004) suggested that a coach's ability to accept, care, and value athletes as people help satisfy a need for relatedness and increase social support.

Little research has been conducted on the difference of social support between competition levels. Parker et al. (2012) noted that athletes across a competitive level all

preferred coaches to care and encourage them, but less so as age increased. Low social support could also suggest a higher athletic maturity, which related to past sport experiences and previous relations with previous coaches (Martin et al., 1999). Athletes who participate in individual sports may hold a higher athletic maturity as they are in a position where their behaviour, actions, and skill development are constantly monitored by higher parties. This would support the view that athletes expect a lower social support from coaches as their job is to train individual athletes and foster self-driven and ego-goal oriented motivation (Reinboth, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2004). At an elite level, athletes focus more on result and competition, lesser effect of athletic performance, as well as being so committed to the sport already that personal support has more of a burden on their progression (Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000).

Throughout previous studies, youth athletes at more of a recreational level prefer a higher level of social support than more competitive and advanced athletes (University/College, National, and International). This suggests that athletes at the youth level seek social support to an extent from coaches, but continue to decline in preference as age and competition level increases. It is suggested that there may be different types of social support within team and individual sports, with specific focus looking at coaches adjusting to different athletes needs and relationships around the sport itself (Pyun at al., 2010). Types of social support may include themes such as emotional, informational, and coaching relationship support; something that Wolfenden and Holt (2005) categorized after interviewing individual sport athletes.

A mastery climate involves coaches that aim to sustain an environment that facilitates players' need for competence and social inclusion. The ability to provide such

an experience also raises athletes' self-determined motivation and quality of enjoyment in their sport (Álvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2009). A mastery climate initiated by the coach, organization, and governing national sport body would influence both a coach's and an athlete's preferred and perceived social support (Alfermann, Geisler, & Okade, 2013; Adie, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2012). In an individual sport setting, Conroy and Coatesworth (2007) studied youth swimmers and found similar comparisons. That is, coaches who exhibited trusting, caring, and continuous praise through different skill levels showed higher levels of athlete interest and satisfaction in the sport. Additionally, youth athletes could differentiate between different coaching strategies that positively correlated autonomy support.

One difference that separated athletes in team and individual sports was some athletes need satisfaction of coaching responsiveness preference. Across individual sports, athletes tended to respond more positively to a praise-related strategy, which included coaches who constantly focus on an individual's skills set (Conroy & Coatesworth, 2007). In a team sport, coaches may tend to use more of a relatedness approach. This approach suggests that coaches who can show they can take time to get to know their athletes away from groups can positively impact the need and sport enjoyment aspect more. Although both strategies need to be equally satisfied, autonomy continues to play a big role in a coach's responsibility for positive development. Smith, Balaguer, and Duda (2006) also identified that athletes perceived more of a positive coach-created climate, limited ego-involvement, as well as less conflict when they had their best friend on the team. This could be more of a major focus in youth sport house leagues to enhance coach-athlete relationships in both team and individual sports.

1.3.2 Instructional Behaviour.

Instructional behaviour refers to a coach's ability to both instruct as well as utilize personal characteristics to influence athlete incentives to participate and enjoy their youth sport experience(s). A coach who can provide proper instruction while maximizing both coaching and athlete characteristics can increase credibility between parties and provide athletes with the best intentions to continue participating in sport.

1.3.2.1 Training and Instruction.

Training and Instruction (TI) was the second most preferred trait of a youth sport coach; which would make sense as the main role of the coach is to facilitate training strategies to help the athlete physically, mentally, and emotionally develop within the sport (Pyun, 2010). Coaches who adjust their coaching strategies and have knowledge of the sport would better suit the athletic environment and can help meet the needs of psychological variables within individuals (Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005; Parker et al., 2012).

As the age of adolescent athletes of both males and females increased, the level of training and instruction (although still high) decreased (Hastie, 1993; Martin et al.,1999). This would help underline a larger assumption that adolescents at a higher age could focus more on strategy and high-performance levels within the sport, as the number of repetitions they gained over their years of experience would have well rounded their technical skill-set. As well, their maturity through participation in sport will have assisted in their expectations and experiences with numerous coaching figures. Out of the categories that analyzed gender and type of sport (team or individual), females who

participated in team sports preferred more training and instruction over female-individual sport, male-team sport, and male-individual sport (Pyun, 2010, Dale, Martin, & Jackson, 2001).

Athlete's who compete in team sports were found to have a higher preference of training and instruction than individual sport athletes (Pyun at al., 2010). Throughout studies, *TI* held a low standard deviation (In comparison with other LSS categories), meaning that team sport athletes did not have a large range of preference when it came to training and instruction techniques; showing that it was equally important and considered crucial for a coach to provide in their teaching practices (Pyun at al., 2010; Shrivastava, 2015; Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005). Research in a team setting showed that lower expectancy athletes perceived that coaches would end drills early before completion, express constant disapproval, and portray a sense of failure and inferiority in the overall sport in regard to lack of training and instruction (Wilson & Stephens, 2007). Athletes also saw coaches spend more time instructing starters over non-starters; but did not take away that those who perceived more success also perceived a higher rate of training and instruction (Westre, 1991). Individuals who were considered high-expectancy athletes observed high training and instruction, but also perceived higher expectations and a greater work ethic and effort from the coach(es) (Wilson & Stephens, 2007). Overall, coaches who took appropriate actions to provide proper training and instruction to their athletes created an environment that allowed them to relate more to and interact better with (Álvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2009). Athletes specifically preferred coaches that could participate in and demonstrate drills, while implementing effective instructional practices (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001). Coaches who also explain to

their team why they demand certain behaviours leads to athletes feeling more competent and responsive to technical and tactical instruction both physically and cognitively (Álvarez, Balaguer, Castillo, & Duda, 2009).

Training and instruction similarly ranked high through individual sports, as the continuous one-on-one time together would focus heavily on reinforcement and skill development (Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005). Both experienced and inexperienced individual sport athletes preferred less training and instruction by their coach at the end of seasons. A greater standard deviation range showed that the preference increased over the course of the season. This could suggest that athletes may have a different interpretation of what a coach may be teaching by the end of season; whether new information and tactics or just reinforcing and supporting previous skills taught (Turnman, 2003). Athletes who would transition to the next competition level show a higher perceived and preferred training and instruction level of coaches from those who did not move on (Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005).

1.3.3 Decision Making.

There are two types of behaviour styles that youth athletes rank and differentiate in terms of preference from their coaches. Democratic behaviour focuses more on a social, cooperative, and inclusive approach, while autocratic behaviour is more coach-specific, individual driven, and done through an autonomous decision-making approach.

1.3.3.1 Democratic and Autocratic Behaviour.

Democratic behaviour in team sports varied based on age of youth athletes but showed similar relations throughout sport experiences. At a younger age, a democratic

approach was continuously ranked higher over an autocratic approach by both males and females. Pyun at al. (2010) mentioned that democratic behaviour in late-adolescent stages is heavily favored on both team and individual sports with relatively similar scores. When coaches were already immersed in multiple seasons with a similar group of athletes, many preferred an autocratic approach. Their preference behind an autocratic behavioural approach was based on the belief that the coach could provide greater direction and motivate their performance and goal outcome preferences (Hastie, 1993). Martin et al. (1999) found that late-adolescent female athletes were more likely than males to prefer coaches that included them in the decision-making process. This would suggest that although democratic behaviour is more athlete-preferred, some athletes would expect coaches to take more control and help them get to their next level of competition at some point of their later adolescent years. When comparing autocratic behaviour preferences, males always preferred a more autocratic approach over females throughout all adolescent stages of their sports participation (Pyun at al., 2010; Parker et al., 2012; Alfermann, Lee, & Wurth, 2005).

Research by Turnman (2003) suggests that certain athletes preferred an autocratic coach, both at points of time and over the course of a season. The preference of a more controlling, autocratic making process by a coach could be based on the athletes' lack of experience, trust in the coach, and belief that the coach knows best. Pyun et al. (2010) mentions that coaches leading teams were employed and hired by their respective schools or organizations in their study, suggesting that athletes would assume that they had great knowledge in the sport and respond more to autocratic behaviour. Coaches who have built trust and rapport with their athletes can consider putting in perspective what athletes

need and make a greater deal of decisions on behalf of the athlete (and potentially team) (Adie, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2012).

1.3.4 Gender.

1.3.2.2 Athlete Gender Vs Coaching Gender.

Minimal attention has been focused on gender of the athlete and their preference of the gender of their coach. Martin et al. (1999) supported the idea to further examine gender and role relationship with behaviours and coach-athlete interactions. As well, the ability to closely connect both parties would further enhance the participants' experience. There was no direct identification of youth preference of specific coaching gender, but more in terms of needs of athletes by coach behaviours. Minimal research has been published in both team and individual sports regarding preferences of coaching gender related to the athlete(s).

Martin, Dale, and Jackson (2001) discovered in a follow up study (2003) that boys in both team and individual sports preferred male coaches, but most children ages 10-14 did not have a preference (M- 48.6%, F-84.8%). Frankl and Babbitt (1998) surveyed over 200 track and field athletes and how they responded to both male and female coach behaviours. Results showed that boys had more of a preferred relationship with a male coach correcting them over a female coach. Results also concluded that only one question regarding anger, punishment, and yelling behaviour was statistically different in comparison between gender of hypothetical coaches.

Although previous literature suggests that female athletes prefer male coaches, Martin, Dale, and Jackson (2001) noted that the rise of females in sport and influence in

general population may alter female athletes' interpretation of power dynamics of a coach's gender; and the result in todays society would show females not having a preference between the two (opposed to a preference of gender regardless of male or female). This would support their findings that most female athletes (84%) did not prefer the gender of their coach(es) at such a young age within team sport. Adolescent girls also preferred more input, team bonding, and goal and strategies than boys did; boys were more focused on competition and a more structured routine (Martin et al., 1999). As conducted by Frankl and Babbitt (1998), female athletes participating in an individual sport felt a more personal impact when being yelled at a by a female coach over a hypothetical male coach, suggesting that the relationship between a same-gender coach and athlete in individual sport may mean more to an athlete than being integrated in a team sport.

It is evident that there is a gap in research pertaining to the investigation of youth preferences of their coaches regarding leadership styles and behaviours and specifically at a younger age bracket (<14). Since coaches account for approximately one out of ten youth athletes dropping out of their sport around the age of thirteen, it is important to assess reasons and factors for their exit from sport and what coaches can do to assist in maintaining participation numbers.

Chapter Two: Rationale, Purpose, and Hypothesis

2.1 Rationale

Participation in youth sport can help develop life skills such as creativity, goal setting, and emotional control. A coach holds responsibility as a parent does at home, or a teacher in the classroom (Carson & Gould, 2010). As coaches, having the opportunity to work with youth through sport offers numerous benefits (e.g., cognitive and emotional development, and linkages to the community) and challenges (e.g., stress, social exclusion, and negative group dynamics) both in and out of sport (Wallach-Bista, 2014). Understanding children at such a young age to improve their sport experiences not only promotes healthy development, but an enjoyment in an activity that can be pursued throughout adolescent years and into adulthood. Crane and Temple (2015) conclude that most drop out cases reported by youth athletes involve factors such as parents, coaches, and other athletes; supporting the importance of relationship within the *Athletic Triangle*. The Canadian Heritage (2010) reported a 17% decrease of sport participation in the past two decades (specifically youth adolescents 10-18). While there has been an increase of gender balance between sports, major factors such as lack of interest and amount of time play a significant role in high drop out rates. The *National Alliance for Sport* (2013) proposed that approximately 70% of youth drop out of sport by the age of 13. Although there may be many factors related to dropout, coach involvement and influence play a part in a child's experience and overall sport and physical activity satisfaction (Visek, Achrati, Mannix, McDonnell, Harris, & DiPietro, 2015).

Previous research has cited most coaching preferences of athletes at the post-secondary (18+) and national sport level, while minimal research has been done in a

young-adolescent age bracket (10-14); particularly within a Canadian sport context. Regarding athletes ages 10-14 and the application of the *LSS*, only Martin, Richardson, Jackson, and Weiller (1999) looked at youth adolescents in a summer camp (USA) while Alfermann, Lee, and Wurth (2005) assessed leadership preferences from a youth swim club (GER). Minimal devotion has looked at coaching gender and differences between team and individual sports. This study presents an opportunity for youth athletes to provide what they prefer from their sport coach regarding leadership and behaviour characteristics. The results hope to offer an application for North American club administrators and coaches to implement in their youth sport programs in attempt to better retain and positively develop athletes throughout their personal and sport careers.

2.2 Statement of Purpose

The general purpose of this present study was to examine youth athletes' preferences of their coach's leadership and behaviour styles. Specifically, this study presented an opportunity to use a mixed-method approach to help strengthen and add to previous literature at the youth sport level; including an identification of similarities and differences between both team and individual sports.

It is with intent that the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are adolescent athletes' preferences in preferred coaching behaviour in a Canadian context?
2. What differences exist between team sport athletes and individual sport athletes in terms of coaching preferences and sport experience satisfaction?

3. Will the results be similar in comparison or be different based on online participation (quantitative) and face-to-face interaction (qualitative) while referring to their coaching preferences?

2.3 Hypothesis

Due to the study being exploratory and there being minimal research conducted with this age group and cultural demographic (Canada), hypothesizing potential results would not remain consistent or reliable with previous literature. The study itself uses both qualitative and quantitative aspects to provide new data to the field of coaching and youth sport; and because of that, no specific hypotheses were put forward.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The structure of this research project was split into two separate phases, with Phase 2 occurring immediately after *Phase 1* was completed. For each section of this chapter, I describe how I researched each category in both *Phase One* and *Phase Two* to provide more of an in-depth explanation and structure to the study.

3.1 Design

A cross sectional study was used for this research project, where youth athletes ages 10-14 had an opportunity to participate in one or two phases of the study. *Phase 1* featured an online questionnaire that was administered to collect an initial data set that consisted of one session of approximately 10-20 minutes. Data were collected at the beginning of the fall term, or more specifically when most athletes began their club seasons in their respective sports. The justification for gathering data at the beginning of a season would allowed participants to list their preferences of a coach before, opposed to gathering data once they have had a coach with them for a month or two already; whom they may have already had positive or negative experiences with that could affect their preferences. Following, participants were given an option to participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview that built on questions from the questionnaire and consisted of one session of 20-25 minutes. This exploratory study underwent thematic analysis to identify similarities and themes between coaching preferences, team and individual sports, and preferred coaching gender.

3.2 Participants

3.2.1 Phase One.

Phase 1 of the study recruited participants from local sport organizations across Southern Ontario. Participants were recruited within a specific age group (10-14) which included participation in a sport for at least one season with a coach facilitating practices and competitions. Within the group of participants, it was encouraged to gather an equal balance of boys and girls to be able to examine differences and similarities.

3.2.2 Phase Two.

Phase 2 of the study featured participants who originally completed Phase *1* and chose to participate in an one-one one, semi-structured interview that would take place in the Fall and Winter term (November 2016 - January 2017) at Brock University. Parents were prompted to read the end of *Phase 1* where they had an option to add in their contact information if interested in a follow up. The qualitative section of the study focused on generating themes based on youth athlete preferences of their coaches and why they preferred different characteristics over others. A 20-25 minute interview was based off questions that were included in the original questionnaire used in *Phase 1* and continued to build on coaching preferences in youth sport. It was with intent that 10-20 participants of equal genders and mixed sports (team versus individual) signed up to help balance out results and provide a healthy representation of gender, age, and participant in a team or individual sport. Overall, 17 participants (11B, 6G) took part in the interview process. Following the interview, pseudonyms were immediately given out to participants to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. A list of names was created based on gender-specific titles, which can be seen below (Figure 3.1). Names were left out (i.e. Taylor, Alex) that may have been subject to gender misinterpretation.

Participant #	Pseudonym	Gender	Type of Sport
1	John	Male	Team
2	Scott	Male	Team
3	Mark	Male	Team
4	Thomas	Male	Team
5	Laura	Female	Team
6	Tim	Male	Team
7	Matthew	Male	Team
8	Mitch	Male	Team
9	Jane	Female	Individual
10	Emily	Female	Individual
11	Patrick	Male	Individual
12	Ethan	Male	Team
13	Justin	Male	Team
14	Daniel	Male	Team
15	Emma	Female	Team
16	Karen	Female	Individual
17	Megan	Female	Individual

3.1. Participant List for Phase 2: Interview Process.

3.3 Measures

3.3.1 Phase One.

Participants completed two questionnaires throughout *Phase 1* that focused on coaching leadership style preferences. First, a demographic questionnaire was filled out that would help better organize and differentiate individuals based on age, gender, sport, and general preferences. The *Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS)* was revised and updated to more accurately portray the participant age range of the participants age range (10-14). To ensure that the corrections were justifiable, both the original and revised questionnaires were reviewed by experts in the field and current teachers at the elementary level, as well as pilot tested with a small sample group to ensure suitable reading comprehension.

3.3.1.1 Demographic Variables.

Age, gender, sport, and preference of coaching characteristics were self-reported by participants at the beginning of the online questionnaire (See Appendix C for entire demographic questionnaire). It was reiterated throughout the questionnaire that the specific sport participants choose to talk about be referenced for all questions. For example, participants were asked if they have been coached by males or females before selecting which one they preferred. Some may have never had a coach of a gender and may hold back in their decision or preference of their ideal coach. Martin, Dale, and Jackson (2001) noted that a higher percentage of athletes (M 43.1%, F 44.6%) did not prefer either gender of coach; something that may or may not change based on the time of most recent findings. As well, athletes were asked about their preference of their coach's age, which, like gender, suggested less of a preference for most athletes. Lastly, participants answered if they have participated or currently participate in both a team and individual sport at the same time. The possibility of having multiple coaches in two completely different environments may require athletes to adjust between sports and prefer qualities similar and/or different to one another.

3.3.1.2 Modified Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS).

Created by Challadurai and Saleh (1980), the *LSS* measures an athlete's preference of coaching leadership behaviour. The questionnaire features 40 items spanning over five categories: Training and Instruction, Autocratic Behaviour, Democratic Behaviour, Social Support, and Positive Feedback. After reviewing the overall structure of the scale, it was determined that the scale was comprehensive for high school to international athletes, but not at a youth adolescent level (Ages 10-14).

Especially since the sentences would be read online and not in person, it would be difficult to assess if participants fully understood the question.

The scale was modified to better suit youth comprehension levels and was referred to as a modified *Leadership for Sport Scale*. After being reviewed by professors, current educators at elementary levels, as well a small pilot test of five adolescents (3M, 2F, *M*(age)= 12.6), two items were dropped from the scale and multiple words were adjusted to enable better comprehension for participants in this age bracket (See Appendices D and E for original, academia notes, as well as final revised version). Additionally, both scripts were compared through the Microsoft Word Flesch readability ease and grade level statistics to ensure comprehension level matched the participant age bracket (Original *LSS*: 60/100 readability, Grade 6 level; Modified *LSS*: 70/100 readability, Grade 5.5 level).

3.3.2 Phase Two.

Phase 2 of the data measures consisted of one scale that was be used to facilitate the interview process. The *Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale (CBAS)* helped structure the interview script and process. The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to allow for the primary researcher to build on previous questions from the questionnaire as well as ask probing questions if a great deal or minimal information was communicated by the participant. Using a semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to keep the interaction engaging as participants in the age bracket used for this study (10-14) was limited after certain amounts of time. Working with kids required the primary researcher to be attentive, focused, supportive, and establishing rapport as soon as possible (even while walking to the interviewing room) to allow the participant to feel

safe, appreciated, and in an environment, that allowed them to be interactive and resourceful in their answers (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013).

3.3.2.1 Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale (CBAS).

The interview guide assisted in qualitatively assessing an athlete's preferences of their coach's leadership and behaviour style(s) and was compared to categories and scores featured in the *LSS*.

The interview guide was based on the two main categories of the *CBAS* – *Reactive Behaviours* and S*pontaneous Behaviours* - that would be preferred by an athlete's ideal coach (See Appendix G). Participants talked about instances or events where they preferred their ideal coach using certain behaviours and/or styles of coaching; and whether they may or may not have preferred it in specific situations. Probing questions continued to build on previous information of coaching styles that kids remembered and helped provide information that would help create themes post-interview. Probing questions were created by the primary interviewer throughout the interview, as each participant required different types of probing questions based on the flow of conversation and quantity and quality of gathered data. More information was collected from the interview to build on the original online questionnaire of quantitative values.

3.4 Procedures

3.4.1 Phase One.

Ethics clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Brock University to pursue *Phase 1* of the study on August 5th, 2016 (See Appendix A for REB

Approval). Following approval, the primary researcher contacted local sport clubs through email (obtained from provincial sport websites) outlining intentions and a request to send out to parent contacts across their database. The club administrator's role was to act as a liaison between researchers and parents/participants – as they had the database of contact information. Parents received an email with the description of the project and the steps needed to fill out. Included in the link were the consent and assent forms, the *LSS* scale, as well as the demographic questionnaire. The questionnaire itself was run by a third-party site (Survey Monkey) that was deemed reputable, consistent, and trustworthy (this site was used in previous studies to ensure confidentiality and anonymity). The participant was told to expect one session of 10-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Since the results were confidential, no personal information was requested in terms of email, name, location. If at any point the participant(s) chose not to participate, they could exit out of the web browser with no occurring penalty (no subsidy for participation). Following the completion of the survey, the first stage of the process was complete.

3.4.2 Phase Two.

Following the conclusion of the first questionnaire, participants were provided an opportunity at the end of the survey to register for *Phase 2* of the study. An interview took place at Brock University where participants came in for one 20-25 minute, one-on-one, semi-structured interview with the primary researcher (See Appendix F for interview script). Only participants who took part in the online questionnaire could participate in the interview process. All information discussed focused on coaching preferences and were based around the *LSS* and *CBAS* scales. The information collected remained

anonymous and confidential for the protection of the participant as a pseudonym was given immediately following the interview. Following the interview, the participant had completed the full and final stage of the study; and would no longer be contacted unless to follow up with results (as requested).

3.4.3.1 Qualitative Coding Procedure.

Following qualitative interviews with participants, transcripts were transcribed *verbatim* and analyzed through Fereday and Muir-Cochrane's (2006) inductive and deductive six-step thematic coding procedure. Thematic analysis involves six steps that were taken throughout the duration of the coding portion of the study.

- Step 1: First, data was familiarized by the researcher by typing out each interview and reading, re-reading, and generating initial ideas. Examples such as culture, communication, and experience with certain genders were some examples noted in the first coding process. It was also a quicker process as the researcher initially noted down some of these themes throughout interviews.
- Step 2: The analyst generated initial codes while categorizing data under each heading (class and sub classes). Any key words that stood out to the analyst were categorized in a longer list of themes with small correlations to the data and other sections. For example, see below in figure 3.2.

Coding	
Social Support: Compassion	
Definition	A coach who is patient and open to hearing athletes' problems and recognize that a coach not only focuses on providing leadership and guidance in the sport, but also as an alternative resource or outlet away from their primary family.
Description	Shown by participants if explaining how their coach can socially support them outside of their sport. Specifically, any comments on caring for them, taking time to check up on them, as well as being someone away from the family.

Figure 3.2: Code Manual Development. (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006)

Once an initial list was created, the analyst verified codes to make sure that they had credibility, reliability, and spoke for the entire content of data. Most time was spent on this step as many codes were not deemed significant or as important as others throughout the process. Each code had its own description and lining up the code name with definition and relevance had to be carefully done to make sure the primary researchers thoughts did not veer off and not speak from the collected interview data. Some codes that were generated were more from opinion and bias (as a coach) and had to be removed or adjusted to better suit the participants responses.

- Step 3*:* Step three required the analyst to summarize initial themes from the data collected from participants and give points on each topic that could share similar preferences with other athletes. For example, Matthew and Justin (in different sports) observed that completing different tasks in their sport and not having their coach acknowledge them made them feel disrespected, let out, and sometimes mad.
- Step 4: Next, additional coding was used to separate data that was based on demographic variables of the participants, including gender and the type of sport they participated in (team vs. individual). For example, a full analysis was done through a gender lens, where boys and girls response similarities and differences were observed. Following, a look between team and individual sports took in any remaining perspective that may have not been considered before. Minimal information came out of this step as few

additional themes were produced in relation to the difference of gender and type of sport.

- Step 5: This step required the data to be analyzed and more refined from an outside perspective, meaning that a story approach and the "what does it mean now" for each coded theme. This step was very short as it was not as in-depth and had no comparison between outside variables, documents, or populations; therefore, the initial categorization from the previous step separated themes appropriately.
- Step 6: Lastly, the created cluster of themes was ensured that it spoke for the majority population and accurately summarized different coaching preferences based on the qualitative script and scale used. This step was done a bit throughout all six steps as codes that were generated early were sometimes more focused on for longer periods of time. Following the completion of one code, the researcher would go back to step two and continue coding.

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1 Phase One: Quantitative Results

Phase 1 results are shown below in relation to the online participation of a modified *Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS).* The tables provide descriptive statistics through significant differences based on gender, type of sport (team vs individual), as well as age group(s).

Table 1

Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) Descriptive Statistics (Overall)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Training and Instruction (TI)	116	4.35	0.77
Democratic Behaviour (DB)	116	3.49	1.03
Autocratic Behaviour (AB)	116	1.67	1.04
Social Support (SS)	116	3.26	1.08
Positive Feedback (PF)	116	4.30	0.82

Note. Scoring on the LSS was ranked from 1-5, with 1 being the least preferred and 5 being the most preferred.

Results in Table 1 show the mean and standard deviation(s) of all five *LSS* categories.

Table 2

Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) Scores Based on Gender (Male (n=44) vs. Female (n=72))

Training and Instruction (TI)		Democratic Behaviour (DB)		Autocratic Behaviour (AB)		Social Support (SS)		Positive Feedback (PF)	
Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
4.43	4.29	3.43	3.53	1.70	1.65	3.42	3.15	4.23	4.35
(0.71)	(0.79)	(1.08)	(1.00)	(0.99)	(1.07)	(1.07)	(1.07)	(0.84)	(0.80)

Note. Scoring on the LSS was ranked from 1-5, with 1 being the least preferred and 5 being the most preferred.

Table 2 results illustrate differences in coaching preferences between male and female youth athletes. The examination assumes that (1) the data is normally distributed and (2) there is a homogeneity of variances between groups. The Kolmogorov-Smirnoff test showed that the data were not normally distributed, while Levene's test showed homogeneity of variance (See Appendix H). Because the original data were not normal, the Mann-Whitney U-Test was applied to the data, which concluded to retain the null hypothesis of each category in relation to gender. Training and Instruction (t (114) = 1.52, p >.05), Democratic Behaviour (t (114) = 0.93, p >.05), Autocratic Behaviour (t (114) = 0.34, p >.05), Social Support (t (114) = 1.95, p >.05), and Positive Feedback (t (114) = 0.82, p >.05), all had no significant differences between male and female youth coaching preferences.

Table 3

Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) Scores Based on Sport Type (Team (n=80) vs. Individual (n=36))

Training and Instruction (TI)		Democratic Behaviour (DB)		Autocratic Behaviour (AB)		Social Support (SS)		Positive Feedback (PF)	
Team	*Indv.*	*Team*	*Indv.*	*Team*	*Indv.*	*Team*	*Indv.*	*Team*	*Indv.*
4.39	4.27	3.37	3.74	1.67	1.68	3.29	3.16	4.30	4.33
(0.74)	(0.81)	(1.02)	(1.40)	(1.01)	(1.10)	(1.06)	(1.12)	(0.82)	(0.77)

Note. Scoring on the LSS was ranked from 1-5, with 1 being the least preferred and 5 being the most preferred.

Table 3 results show differences in coaching preferences of the *LSS* between team and individual sport youth athletes. This analysis assumes that (1) the data is normally distributed and (2) there is a homogeneity of variances between groups. The Kolmogorov-Smirnoff test showed that the data were not normally distributed, while Levene's test showed homogeneity of variance (See Appendix I). Because the original data were not normal, the Mann-Whitney U-Test was used and retained the null hypothesis of four of the five categories in relation to type of sport (team or individual). Training and Instruction (t (114) = 1.28, p >.05), Autocratic Behaviour (t (114) = 0.08, p >.05), Social Support (t (114) = 0.98, p >.05), and Positive Feedback (t (114) = 0.01 p >.05), all had no significant differences between team and individual youth sport coaching preferences. The only category that showed statistical significance was Democratic Behaviour (t (114) = 2.72, p <.05), identifying that there was a preferred

difference and rejected the null hypothesis that individual sport athletes had a higher preference than team sport athletes.

Table 4

Summary of Correlations in Relation to Age Group and LSS Variable(s)

Measure	Age (N=116)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Training and Instruction	-.01	-	-	-	-	-
2. Autocratic Behaviour	-.01	-.05	-	-	-	-
3. Democratic Behaviour	-.01	.27**	-.02	-	-	-
4. Positive Feedback	-.02	.23*	-.03	-.01	-	-
5. Social Support	-.11	.11	.13	.21*	.25	-

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-Tailed)
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-Tailed)

Table 4 results show a correlation test of coaching preferences of *LSS* variables with ages of youth athletes. This analysis conducted assumes that (1) the data is normally distributed and (2) there is linearity within the results. The Kolmogorov-Smirnoff test showed that the data were not normally distributed, while linearity was tested through a scatter plot and upheld all assumptions. All the variables measured showed no significant correlation with age.

4.2 Phase One: Quantitative Discussion

The primary purpose of this research study was to examine athletes' preferences of their coaches' leadership and behaviour styles in youth sport. Data were gathered through

the *Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS)* while the *MDML* was contextualized to its actual relation based on results and previous literature. Descriptive statistics provided primary results of athletes across 19 sports within Southern Ontario. Overall preferences of athletes according to their gender, type of sport, and age group were studied.

4.2.1 Gender Preferences.

The first research question looked at coaching preferences between male and female athletes and found no differences in comparison with *LSS* variables. Results from the current study support previous findings in the studied age bracket (Ages 10-14), however, show both similarities and inconsistencies to later-adolescent (Ages 14-18) preferences based on athlete gender.

Both Chelladurai's (2007) *MDML* model and Horn's *Coaching Effectiveness Model* (2002) suggest that member (or personal) characteristics such as gender play a role in determining their perception, interpretation, and evaluation of coaching behaviour. Data from this study do not support a view that personal characteristics such as gender lead to any differences in preference of coaching behaviour, implying that past studies that have shown later-adolescence gender differences may develop over periods of time and experience.

This research thus supports previous findings by Martin, Jackson, Richardson, and Weiller (1999), who found no differences between genders of athletes ages 10-14 while both Turnman (2003) and Shrivastava and Sharma (2015) showed youth genders ages 10-18 had no difference of coaching preference. Sherman, Fuller, and Speed (2000) considered differences between sports, and found that there was still no distinction of coaching preferences between male and female athletes.

In later-adolescence (Ages 14-18), studies show one or two categories of the *LSS* that are significantly more preferred by either males or females. Gender differences between males and females were identified in all separate studies and categories, including: *Training and Instruction*, (Beam, 2001; Sharma, 2015; Bolkiah & Terry, 2001); *Democratic Behaviour*, (Martin et al., 1999; Pyun et al., 2010); *Autocratic Behaviour*, (Bolkiah & Terry, 2001; Challadurai & Saleh, 1980; Sherman, Fuller, & Speed, 2000; Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004); and *Social Support*, (Gardner, 1996; Alfermann, 2005; Macphail, Gorley, & Kirk, 2003). Only *Positive Feedback* did not have significant differences related to gender, as it was usually the most preferred trait of a sport coach across studies.

Overall, the absence of gender differences in the current study suggests that preferences for specific leadership styles in females (e.g., Positive Feedback; Alfermann et al., 2005) and males (e.g., Autocratic Behaviour; Surujlal & Dhurup, 2012, Mji & Surujlal, 2013) may not emerge until later adolescence when preferences are more developed and refined. Additionally, the increase of age may be influenced by their surroundings and external factors such as: cultural, type of sport, environment, parental involvement, and possibly even format of sport (league, camp, high performance).

4.2.2 Team versus Individual Sport

The second research question examined if any notable differences existed between team and individual sport athletes towards certain coaching preferences. There was a significant finding in the current study where individual sport athletes had a greater preference for democratic behaviour over team sport athletes. Aside from a preference for democratic behaviour, the other four categories of the *LSS* (*Training and Instruction*,

Autocratic Behaviour, Social Support, and Positive Feedback) showed no difference in preference.

Chelladurai's (2007) *MDML* model shows a relationship between situational characteristics such as the type of sport that athletes participate in (team vs individual) and the preferred behaviour of coaches; which is identified and upheld in the results of the present study. However, the acknowledgement that only *Democratic Behaviour* was identified as a major preference by individual sport athletes suggests that youth ages 10-14 only identify a preference when referring to minimal *LSS* variables within situational characteristics (type of sport).

Findings from the current study identify that athletes prefer a democratic coaching style more in individual sports than team sports; which is commonly found and supported throughout previous studies (Pyun, et al., 2010, Terry & Howe, 1984, Bolkiah & Terry, 2001). This shapes coaches' relationship with their athletes in individual sports, as they require a closer connection and relationship opposed to larger group and social-oriented environment in team sports (Sherman et al., 2000, & Beam, 2001). The results from the current study in addition to previous research identify the consistent preference for athletes who are participating in an individual sport throughout early-adolescent (Ages 10-14), late-adolescent (Ages 14-18), and post-secondary athletes (Ages 18-24). Only research from Turnman (2003) suggested athletes in individual sports preferred more of an autocratic coach over democratic behaviour.

4.2.3 Age of Athlete and Coaching Preferences

The final research question analyzed the age of the athlete and their specific preferences in relation to one another. The current study showed no differences between

the age of athletes regarding *Training and Instruction*, *Democratic Behaviour*, *Autocratic Behaviour*, *Social Support*, and *Positive Feedback*. The relationship between variables suggest that athletes aged 10-14 years in the current study share similar preferences of their coach regarding behaviour and leadership styles. Due to the nature of the current study being exploratory, minimal reference to previous studies in this age group was available to support or contradict results.

Like gender preferences, models such as *MDML*, Smith, Smoll, and Hunt's (1989) *Mediational Model of Leadership (MML)* and Horn's (2002) *Model of Coaching Effectiveness* note a relationship between age of the athlete and coaching preferences. Because no relationship is found based off the athletes' specific age and coaching preferences, coaches should not be focused on the actual age more than the range and age bracket (Ages 10-14) itself.

Restating the minimal research and comparison to the current study, studies that did conduct research did not find a significant difference between age and coaching preferences; supporting a view that youth athletes all tend to share the similar preference of participation, setting goals, and fostering a healthy culture within the sport environment (Martin et al., 1999, Terry, 1984, Terry & Howe, 1984; Hastie, 1993).

Athletes ages 10-14 tend to go through their maturity and puberty phases and have shown similar preferences to a coaches' motivational tendencies, training and instruction, and decision-making styles. Kids tend to all hit puberty at different times within this age bracket, making it difficult for research to gauge a specific age where one may prefer a different type of coaching behaviour over another. As well, females tend to go through

puberty earlier than males, making it even more difficult to differentiate specific preferences – hence why no preferences were significant and emerged in results.

Additionally, athletes in the current study reported (on average) having over three different coaches in a two-year span throughout all sports, which exposes them to multiple coaches and a variety of coaching styles. Because of their involvement in many different types (team/individual) and number of sports, having specific preferences based on the specific sport may not be fully identified because of the "sampling phase" they go through; opposed to specializing in one sport and one coach for all their youth adolescence. Between social play, school teams, and club sports, athletes are provided the opportunity to comprehend, evaluate, and favour different coaching behaviours that can shape their enjoyment and involvement in overall sport; something that will become more refined as they age and competition level increases (Macphail, Gorley, & Kirk, 2003).

4.3 Phase Two: Qualitative Results

Using Smith and Smoll's (1989) *Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale (CBAS)*, *Phase 2* involved gathering data that reflected participants' responses. Below in Figure 4.1, the chart shows the categorized classes and derived themes from the data. The data is split into two overarching sections. Major Class 1 and 2 (Reactive and Spontaneous Behaviours) were originally created from the *CBAS* while Class 3 and 4 (Social Support and Coaching Gender) were created based on collected results. While referring to deductive coded themes (Class 1 and 2), Sub-Class 1 categories were provided while Sub-Class 2 and 3 were created based on participants responses. Since an indicative approach was used for Classes 3 and 4, Sub-Class 1, and 2 were all created using

thematic coding analysis.

4.1 Phase 2: Qualitative Themes Coded through the Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale (CBAS)				
Deductive Coded Themes (Within the CBAS)				
Class	**Major Classification**	**Sub-Class 1**	**Sub-Class 2**	**Sub-Class 3**
1	Reactive Behaviours	Response to a Desirable Performance	Type of Feedback	*General*
				Specific
				Goal-Oriented
			Athlete Perception to Magnitude of Reward	*Small*
				Medium
				Large
			Rewarding Based on the Individual Athlete	
			Reward Frequency	*Too Much*
				Not Enough
			Regulation of Feedback	
		Response to Mistakes	Type of Feedback	*Specific*
				Honest
				Goal-Oriented
			Practice vs Competition Mistakes	
		Response to Misbehaviour	General Tactics	
			Physical Activity as Punishment	*Result of Physical Activity*
				Lack of Previous Experience
				Appreciative of Physcial Activity
2	Spontaneous Behaviours	Game-Related Behaviours	General Technical Instruction	
			Perception of Organization	*Practice Perception*
				Competition Perception
		Game-Irrelevant Behaviours	Authentic	
			Humorous	
Inductive Coded Themes (Not Affiliated with CBAS)				
Class	**Major Classification**	**Sub-Class 1**	**Sub-Class 2**	**Sub-Class 3**
3	Social Support	Strategies for Increased Social Support	Communication	
			Compassion	
			Community	
		Male vs Females	Gender Difference	
4	Coaching Gender	No Preference of Coaching Gender	Previous Positive Experience	
			Previous Negative Experience	
		Preference of Coaching Gender	Previous Positive Experience	
			Previous Negative Experience	

Coded themes are provided above in *Figure 4.1* for both reactive and spontaneous behaviours (Class 1 and Class 2). Due to both classes already developed by Smith and Smoll in the Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale, deductive analysis was conducted for these classes to compare results previously acknowledged in the Coaching Behaviour Assessment Scale.

4.3.1 Class 1: Reactive Behaviours.

Reactive Behaviours focus on three different sub-classes that emphasize preferred coaching reactions to an event or action that would take place in a practice or competition setting. The three categories that are found in sub-class one delineates a youth athlete's preferences of their ideal coach's: (1) in response to a desirable performance, (2) to mistakes, and (3) to misbehaviour that could take place in a group or individual setting.

4.3.1.1 Response to a Desirable Performance.

4.3.1.1.1 Type of Feedback.

Athletes provided informative responses in terms of the type of feedback that they would receive from their ideal coach. When rewarding an athlete for a good performance, all athletes requested generic feedback. Terms such as "Good Job" and "Awesome" were preferred by all participants while being acknowledged for a good performance. For others, once they were provided with basic feedback, it was preferred that they were provided the next step in performance or to obtain a new and more challenging goal. For example, Ethan stated: "[To] Tell you that you are doing a good job and tell you what you are doing good, what you need to improve on", while Emily suggested: "I would like

to hear them say good job, you did very well, but let's make sure next time you focus on this and that".

Athletes preferred that feedback provided by coaches was routinely followed up with some sort of criteria for completing another skill or carrying out the specific performance at a higher success rate. Athletes who were interviewed wanted to hear positive feedback from their coach after a desirable performance but additionally preferred something to improve their performance in the future. For example, a young athlete who learned how to hit the ball properly in volleyball would want good feedback for the overall performance, but – now knowing they have done it properly – would also want the next step for improving their game; for example, hitting a different array of shots on the court.

4.3.1.1.2 Athletes' Perception to Magnitude of Reward.

Athletes who took part in interviews provided their own perception of rewards after the success of small, medium, or large-scale performance(s). Interview questions were not developed to inquire about these specific levels, but were generated in conversation by the researcher. Moreover, they were asked what a good performance to them might entail and what their preferred coach's reply should be while rewarding. Although individual sport athletes provided little information on this, team sport athletes at the youth level were mostly found to understand rewards and the structure of different types and aspects that might require.

On a small (or minimal) success level, athletes preferred coaches to provide verbal and/or physical acknowledgement of the performance. Actions such as hitting a

ball in the court, scoring a goal, or even having a good shift were all considered as small successes to athletes. Mitch saw small success rewards, “As for basics, I want the coach to be happy on the sidelines and sort of clapping from the bench”; which for Scott included, “Like a tap on the back, sometimes he says good job”.

An example of a medium-sized performance reported by participants included having a great practice or winning a match or race. A major theme in this category was associated with a tangible accolade or individual recognition based on the actual event or game. Participants’ views on the scale of reward is demonstrated in the subsequent quotes.

> If someone has a good practice – you get a game ball ... so it’s like a ball with a bunch of names signed on it and it’s like, oh – so and so did good at practice, they get a game ball. It’s another thing they can do to make that person feel really good about their practice day. (Emma)

> To reward me, we have this thing after a game called the golden jersey that tells you that you played really good, so I would like that. (Laura)

In terms of large-scale rewards, athletes considered winning a tournament or championship to be the maximum, or largest scale of success in their respective sports. The participants generated different examples of preferred coaching actions or behaviours including team events, fun practices, or even a more democratic culture following the success. Participants referred to larger rewards such as: “The players should decide what the practice is going to be like” (Jane). Daniel proposed:

> Probably have a get together, or have a fun practice right after that. We do something like win a tournament or something" ... and, "Maybe we could have a fun practice or a get together.

Data showed that through rewards for small, medium, and/or large success from performances, youth athletes in all sports still agree on equal allocation of rewards and coach feedback amongst their peers. That is, coaches should distribute rewards equally amongst players for similar levels of success. With that said, participants suggested that coaches should identify different interactions and events that may take place with their athlete(s) and attempt to portray different rewarding reactions, comments, and actions based on the magnitude of performance. For example, a coach clapping when someone scores a basket should not result in the same reaction as when a team has just won a game; even more so if they end up winning a tournament. Emily preferred a coach employing an appropriate reward structure when referring to a single point reward as: "Nothing special, it's just one point. If we won the tournament then that would be more special, we should get something better, but not just for a single point". Furthermore, having a pizza party for winning a heat in a track and field race should not have a similar reactive result to qualifying for nationals. The action may be just as small (maybe a high five to each team member) or large (team party, fun practice), but should be differentiated based on the event itself.

4.3.1.1.3 Reward Feedback Based on Individual Athlete.

Coaches who are perceived by athletes to not reward accordingly may be doing harm. In terms of specific athletes, data from interviews suggested all youth athletes want

praise for any scale or event regardless of their own skill level compared to their peers. Examples of responses include:

> You just did a superman catch (Baseball) and your coach doesn't even say good job, that was a good play. And yea, that would kind of aggravate me, but maybe someone caught a ball, just a pop fly out of the blue and he says great job, you're doing awesome! Then I would kind of feel like he doesn't like me, or I kind of feel that he doesn't want to admire my good performance. (Matthew)

> Because maybe someone else, they scored a goal, and he congratulated them and not you. (Justin)

Due to the constant, unpredictable, outcome-oriented variables in sport, coaches are required to communicate with their athletes at a fast-moving pace and may not recognize the amount or type of feedback they convey to their athletes. From time to time, they may acknowledge a skill execution or performance of an athlete that may have already been done previously by someone else; for example, catching a fly ball in baseball. Some athletes may have the coordination or speed to track down a ball, where others could be catching for the first time. It could be suggested that coaches reward athletes differently based on their own skill level and "progress" (as everyone develops at a different rate); however, through interviews, most kids at the youth level do not see it that way. Instead, their social reasoning infers that since they could do something that others may still be learning, they still deserve a certain amount of recognition; even though a coach may believe that they will get rewarded for doing something that is challenging for that athlete.

4.3.1.1.4 Reward Frequency.

Coaches need to identify and balance their rewards associated with their role as a coach on a youth sport team. They need to be able to recognize where good performances need to be justified and communicated appropriately based on their specific sport type and competition reward structure. A coach who may reward their athlete(s) too much may experience negative outcomes such as: less appreciation for individual acknowledgement by athletes, lack of trust or credibility in the coach's knowledge, and the self-doubt and uncertainty of their own skill set and performance level. Mitch made the following observation about a coach who may reward too much:

> I don't want to get rewarded for getting something just good. Like, if we win the championship, that's completely different than hitting a spike ... But if we setup one really good play, then I only want him to be happy and clapping on the sideline. (Mitch)

There can also be times when a coach does not reward enough or fails to respond to a good performance. The data were similar between team and individual sports. Players felt disappointed and self-conscious of their own skill level; for example, Ethan thought: "I would feel like I need to do better". To add on to this, an athlete may feel even worse when it (the specific skill, result, play) was specifically worked on in practice or in the game plan.

> For me, I think that's completely rude, because if you do something good like a corner shot (Attack in Volleyball), I think all coaches I have had and

> hope to have would be, like, really happy for you to do that, because you have been working on recently in practice. (Mitch- Team Sport)

These data support quantitative results and previous literature that autocratic behaviour styles are the least preferred sport coaching behaviour across athletes' age, gender, and sport type. Actions coaches may exhibit that identify as autocratic behaviours to athletes (e.g. keeping to oneself and ignoring or not explaining their actions) were acknowledged through qualitative interviews and have been recognized as hurtful and harming actions by athletes.

Most males (7/11) did not seem to care when it came to a coach ignoring or not acknowledging a good performance, with John and Patrick stating that, "I wouldn't really care". They interpreted these actions as indications that the coach may be busy with other players, see different positives to the buildup of the specific performance, or be focused on a result in competition before deciding on their type of feedback. For example:

> I would just kind of let it go, because there's so many other players on the team, and they may have missed it or like he could have ... needed to talk to another player at that time, or something else like that. (Thomas - Team)

Females, however, took their preference of non-reinforcement from their coach regarding a successful performance much differently. Almost every participant who was interviewed had a negative interpretation and perception of a coach who would exhibit these specific actions (5/6). Below are several excerpts from the data that highlight this point:

> I would feel pretty defeated, because I know I would have done well but the coach might not have realized that. (Jane - Individual)

> Well I mean, maybe – this is just personally, I like to be acknowledged when I do something that will – that I think is good and they also think its good. Then I like to be told that I did it right, then I know what I was doing, and the skill that I was doing, I was doing it properly. And I think that you should be acknowledged when you get something that is right and good. (Emma)

Both Jane and Emma identify that a coach who fails to positively reinforce after a successful performance has the athlete self-doubting their actions to whether it was a successful performance or not.

4.3.1.1.5 Overall Sport Regulation of Feedback

No significant difference in qualitative data was evident between team or individual sport(s) when it came to *Positive Feedback*, showing that coaches need to be able to understand and implement different reward strategies and acknowledgements when responding to a desired or successful performance. Coaches should note that reward frequency in terms of team sports award points (or successful performances) more often (Volleyball, Basketball) versus sports where there tend to be fewer points scored (Soccer, Baseball, Hockey). This can also be considered in individual sport(s), where rewards can come more over the course of a competition (Golf, Badminton, Tennis) as opposed to a single attempt or less frequent competition (Track and Field, Cross Country, Swimming).

Coaches need to be able to manage the magnitude and quantity of praise to maintain maximum recognition and credibility by the athlete(s).

4.3.1.2 Response to Mistakes.

4.3.1.2.1 Type of Feedback.

In the current study, athletes preferred that coaches who provide feedback should keep a positive tone and encourage reflection; however, they felt it is crucial that they reflect with honesty rather than giving "Fake Feedback". Previous sections have outlined an athlete's dissatisfaction with coaches ignoring mistakes or failing to respond to a desirable performance, meaning that feedback in general is crucial regardless of a positive or negative outcome. The importance is also supported by the *LSS* results in the current study and literature which highlights that encouraging feedback is one of the highest preferences of sport coaches (Turnman, 2003; Shrivastava & Sharma, 2015). The desire for feedback in general is shown in the quote below as coaches need to provide some sort of feedback to their athletes following a mistake.

> I would like a coach to give me some feedback so that I can take that, and I can still take it and still work harder for next time, for the next competition, because there is always going to be second chances. (Tim)

Quantitative results collected in *Phase 1* show both *Positive Feedback* and *Training and Instruction* as the highest preferred categories from athletes. However, themes generated from interview data in this research show that youth athletes desire more than generic feedback. They want to hear the specifics when it comes to responding to mistakes. To build on generic coaching responses to a

mistake, training and instruction focused on sections that included specific, honest, and goal-oriented feedback.

Specific Feedback.

Results from participants highlight that coaches should not only praise or give general feedback phrases such as, “Good Job”, “Nice Try”, or “Next Time”, but to give technical-specific instruction on top of it. Athletes who receive general encouragement feel better but want to understand what they need to do differently to be successful the next time. Quotes below illustrate some specific instances that coaches should use specific feedback when an athlete makes a mistake:

> Say, I shoot it and it goes too high (Ice Hockey), he would say to keep your chest down and keep your eye on the puck. Or if a bad goal goes in, to keep your pads down right, or keep your glove high. (Daniel)

> We go and make big swings (Volleyball) and they will go out sometimes and he will say keep swinging and to keep flicking your wrists more. So, like encourage us, but then tell us to do something to help what we are trying to do”. (Emma)

The quotes support technical corrections from coaches that would assist athletes in understanding what specific mistakes they made. Some athletes were comfortable with general feedback when it came to a basic skill or technique that their coach knew they could do or have done already. When it came to learning a new skill or building on from something previously learned, athletes preferred a coach who provided specific feedback

through their instruction (e.g. giving specific instruction for what athletes should do in every situation and paying special attention to correcting athletes' mistakes).

Honest Feedback.

When it came to the type of feedback, athletes desired their ideal coach to provide it honestly. Honest feedback includes the expectation of the coach to deliver and provide an authentic opinion to help develop a trustworthy relationship with their athlete. An athlete who can trust their coach with what they are telling them will help both parties improve and decrease the amount of arguing, and help gain confidence in one another when it comes to skill development. This can be seen below in the following statement:

> Sometimes I know if I'm doing something wrong and it kind of aggravates me when the coach doesn't tell you when you are doing something wrong. (Matthew)

> They will be honest about their opinion to improve you, cause if they told you that you are doing good and you are improving but you weren't really improving or anything, then you would want to really know if you were actually improving or not. (Megan)

A coach who can be honest with their athlete can also develop credibility: a coach with little knowledge may not establish the same trustworthiness and authority from an athlete. This is heavily supported from *Phase 1* data, as athletes reported their preference of a coach who knew what information they were talking about provided honest evaluations through their coaching practices (e.g. making sure athletes understand their

part on the team in relation to technical abilities, pointing out strengths and weaknesses of athletes and identifying trustworthy expectations of each member).

Goal-Oriented Feedback.

Following a mistake, athletes identified a preference for the coach to set goals and benchmarks to help them improve on that specific skill or action. A small goal-oriented plan could be related to technique, where focusing more on applying the actual form leading up to the action may be more valued than the result (such as contacting the ball at the highest point on one's tennis serve). A larger goal-oriented plan could be more focused on result-based performance, where the outcome may be subject to actual execution (such as making three out of five free throws into a basketball net). Athletes want a coach to further the correction of the mistake by providing more than just a general phrase and a goal to build or improve on, as stated by Emily: "I would like to hear them say good job, you did very well, but let's make sure next time you focus on this specific thing". Ethan also mentioned, "Like tell you that you are doing a good job and tell you what you are doing good, what you need to improve on to get better."

To maximize specific, honest feedback, coaches must be able to follow up with athletes who make mistakes and help them set attainable goals. As mentioned above, goals may be small in terms of the overall action or result, but could have a purpose to helping the athlete move a step forward to the larger success. Setting these goals can employ more of a democratic approach, as athletes prefer to set their own goals with some input from coaching guidance. Daniel believed: "Because you want them to help set your goals ... Maybe scoring a certain number of goals, saving a number of shots, or like, not always ducking when one is shot at your head". Data showed that players preferred

coaches who sometimes helped create reachable targets such as setting goals as a group, having a shared decision process, as well as letting individuals work at their own speed.

It is clear athletes have reinforced their preference(s) when it comes to a coach responding to mistakes that may happen in their sport. Positive feedback is supported in both approaches but presents more than just standard, generic praise or clapping of hands (Martin, Richardson, Jackson, & Weiller, 1999; Alfermann, Lee, Wurth, 2005). Gathering qualitative data in this mixed-method study has generated themes that could not have been collected independently through the initial survey phase of this study. Participants felt that coaches need to be honest with their athletes in their feedback, provide technical recognition or adjustment, and help set specific performance and/or technique based goals; something if done correctly will develop other preference categories (Social Support, Democratic Behaviour) and help foster a more inclusive sport culture. Both P*ositive Feedback* and *Training and Instruction* play a major role in coach's behaviour, with both impacting one other. In addition, when integrated, the use of positive feedback and proper instructing can help improve a coach's overall relationship with their youth athlete(s).

It is important to note the preference of constructive criticism of a coach. Athletes have established that they do not want to be ridiculed or spoken down to, but a coach who is sensitive to their feelings and can also help them improve. Although a democratic coaching approach may be more preferred by athletes when it comes to decision making and input in team activities and drills, a coach who has challenging, high responsive, and high demanding qualities with their athletes may have a greater response and appreciation from them.

4.3.1.2.2 Mistake Corrections in Practice vs Competition.

Results showed that within a practice setting for both team and individual sports, coaches should provide more technical recognition of mistakes because of a more frequent interaction with players and less competitive situation. Once competition begins, the recognition and adjustment of mistakes may not come as frequently from the coach as they may be focused on other aspects of the game, or may not have easy access to players on the field or court. Furthermore, depending on the type of competition, there may not be enough time for athletes to reflect on mistakes (more of an event) or even want to hear negative recollections of past instances after each point. There were no striking differences between athletes' preferences for having coaches correcting a mistake in a practice or competition setting; however, participants did refer to ways coaches used practices to include more technical instruction related to the actual skill. For example, Mitch said:

> If it's a major mistake in practice they will become critical, but if its not that major, I want them to keep a positive mindset; you can get it next time or something like that to keep influencing and practice more on that specific part so that you can really nail it down. (Team Sport)

In a game, the only instruction preferred would be based on a certain situation or play. Matthew said:

> In competition, well my ideal coach, if he doesn't want me to take the pitch but I take the pitch, I wouldn't want him to get mad at me, but kind of just say, hey I didn't tell you to take the pitch. If the pitch was right in

> there, I would want him to say I didn't tell you take that pitch, you shouldn't have swung there, that was a great pitch; I probably wouldn't do that in real life, but if I did I would want him to say that. (Team Sport)

The quotes illustrate that coaches are preferred to focus on technical instruction more in practice situations, while in game or competition they should pay more attention to current situations or other occurring factors. Although competition may provide a space for technical correction, athletes may see it more as a place to offer reminders about a specific technique (for example following through on a pitch) rather than practicing something new or a skill not pre-discussed.

4.3.1.3 Response to Misbehaviour.

4.3.1.3.1 General Tactics.

Throughout coding procedures, no major themes were created in response to how a coach should maintain control of their athletes when responding to misbehaviour. Suggestions such as raising their voice, settling everyone down before speaking, and running drills that would allow for everyone to be under supervision at the same time was what most athletes recommended. Some of the quotes below illustrate how players would prefer their coach to handle situations where a group of athletes or individuals may be misbehaving:

> He goes to the door and he kind of shouts a bit, which is okay with me if he just shouts and says guys you're being a little loud. Or, guys, you're not doing what I told you to do, or guys you're being a little crazy. That kind of stuff, I would want my ideal coach to do. (Matthew)

> My coach would make sure no one would be talking when he's talking, keep people who were goofing around separated, like far away from the other. (Emily)

Although these preferences were not directly announced, it seems that players just want their coach to make the necessary behaviours to get the attention of their athlete(s). If that requires raising their voice or implementing measures that the team should follow, the result can restore order individually or in a group setting.

4.3.1.3.2 Physical Activity as Punishment.

Participants were asked about a punishment their ideal coach would implement in their practice if an individual or the team/group were misbehaving. Almost every participant (16/17) referred to the use of physical activity as a tool for punishment. Additionally, athletes had a positive perception on the overall concept and did not mind their coach(es) using it. The suggested preference for physical activity as punishment can be justified by three proposed logics. First, there is a possibility that athletes realize the resulting factors of physical activity. Athletes who are forced to run or do pushups usually become tired, exhausted, or mentally uncomfortable quickly (as it may not be something they are used to doing). The cognitive understanding that being tired and exhausted is not something they want to be a part of and forces them to change their Behaviour based on that notion; which was supported below.

> Sometimes when we are practicing our switching (positions) and all that, and someone just lets the ball drop and no one goes for it, he will make us do lines or suicides. And I think that's a fair punishment, because you

> didn't move for that ball at all, so obviously, you need to do something about it – and then we know for next play if we don't want to do lines then we need to work on passing that ball. (Emma)

> Like I know that I don't like doing lines, but that is helpful to me, because then I'm like, I don't want to have to do lines again so I'll work harder at that - so I think that's a good punishment. (Jane)

A second reason for identifying physical activity as punishment may be because it is the only type of punishment they know as young adolescents – that is, they have been socialized by their prior sporting experiences to understand that this is a common form of punishment in a sports environment. This was a concern with many respondents' answers, as they did not have another experience upon which to base their responses; such as Ethan who supposed, "Yeah (physical activity) ... I don't know what else it could be ...". Some other participants suggested ideas such as time-outs, the removal of playing time in fun activities or competition, or even having a discussion with parents. The influence and impact physical activity for punishment has had on the participants' interview suggests this form of punishment may be accepted but that may be because of their minimal knowledge of different alternatives, and not so much on the realization of its immediate consequences.

The third logic for the approval of physical activity as punishment could be associated with an athlete's primary intentions to participate in the sport itself. Young athletes have already signed up to participate in the sport, which involves physical activity regardless of punishment or not. This could suggest that any form of physical activity as punishment is not really considered punishment because it is something they

do all the time and often enjoy. There may be times where a certain amount of activity (50 pushups) is strenuous, however, the application of putting in effort and producing sweat results in a feeling of accomplishment or justification. Children who may not mind physical activity may already be physically fit or enjoy that kind of punishment, as stated by Justin:

> I'm like one of the fastest skaters on my team, so I'm not as bad as skating as some of the other kids. Like I wouldn't ... like some other people would not like it, (laughs) ... some other people wouldn't like it as much (skating laps), but I wouldn't mind it as much.

The type of punishment a coach hands out may not always apply to every athlete they are working with. For some, doing laps may be tiring but overall emulates the overall goal of physical activity in youth. For others, they may already be a talented skater and may not mind "showing" off. So, is it really a punishment for those athletes? Further discussion in the following chapter will look at potential alternatives and situations where punishments could be tailored to specific individuals or groups.

4.3.2 Class 2: Spontaneous Behaviours.

Spontaneous Behaviours focus on two different sub-classes that emphasize preferred coaching reactions to an event or action that can take place in a practice or competition setting. First, *Game-Related* behaviours arise from coach's involvement of general technical instruction, encouragement, as well as overall organization as a coach. The second subsection reflects *Game-Irrelevant* behaviours, which focuses on the general communication a coach has with their athlete(s) away from the sport itself.

4.3.2.1 Game-Related.

Game-related behaviours from coaches are classified based on decisions in sport that do not derive from desirable performances or mistakes. This includes instruction from coaches that involve general technique and strategy in the sport, spontaneous encouragement, as well as a coach's organization skills.

4.3.2.1.1 General Technical Instruction.

It was preferred that a coach who is knowledgeable in their sport can teach their athletes skills and strategies unrelated to a previous performance, outcome, or action. Furthermore, coaches can provide both technical and tactical encouragement and learning opportunities for their athletes to build skills such as decision-making and sport "IQ" skills. Youth athletes interviewed in this research prefer their coach to build on technical skills and explain why they do certain things in different situations. Support of coaches who provide instruction and strategies in general is documented below:

> Before the game, maybe they talk about stuff to do pre-game, explain to us what we have to do against a specific team, or if there's a star player that's good to stay on him, or two-man coverage him. (Scott)

> Positioning, so they know where everyone is, who's on and off... In game, for supporting the team, and giving them tips and reminders about that stuff in practice so they can do better in a tournament or game. (Matthew)

A coach who teaches general skills can help an athlete understand more about the sport, their role in the group, and allow athletes to solve problems in different scenarios. Balanced instruction can develop universal life skills, such as youth athletes self-

coaching themselves and beginning to apply critical thinking skills in everything they do (e.g. helping plan practices and deciding what plays to be run in the game).

4.3.2.1.2 Youth Athlete Perception of Organization

Youth athletes identified that a coach who is organized can be interpreted and enacted in many ways. The ability to differentiate between an organized and unorganized coach also follows with perceptions and resulting factors. Participants provided data that reflected their views about what it meant to be an organized and unorganized coach. Athletes defined an organized coach as someone who was on time, maintained athlete attendance at practice(s) and competition(s), and made sure that sporting equipment was set up and always available. Unorganized coaches were perceived as those who were late, did not care as much in drills, and did not show motivation while beginning practices; as perceived by John: “Late for practices, doesn’t have an idea what to do ... doesn’t ever tell you when there is practice, he just expects you to know what is going on”. Organization was also differentiated in both practice and competition settings, where multiple differences came to define a coach and what they were responsible for.

Practice

In terms of specific responsibilities when it came to practice(s), participants suggested that a coach has different responsibilities when it came to certain environments and situations. In a practice or training setting, coaches were expected to have practices scheduled and know what drills they were running; usually including a practice plan. This was summarized by Emma: “They would know what drills to be doing, and know how long to run them, and have an idea before the practice has begun” and John: “Have his

practice scheduled, so he knows what to do. Make sure who is coming to practices (send emails out), and always have the equipment ready". As well, the ability for a coach to recruit guest coaches to come to help when needed was preferred by athletes. Expectations of their ideal coach was outlined by Daniel:

> Have a coach come in once in awhile to train what the coach thinks you are not doing well on. So, like say you are not doing well on your passing, then he would have a coach or someone that is really good at passing come; or you can't keep your stick down, he would have a goalie coach come in and try to fix that. (Daniel)

When it came to an unorganized coach, Mitch summed up that they would:

> Sort of just scramble between, for example in practices, they scramble between, okay you finished this drill but then they don't know what to do next. So, they just kind of think of a drill that you may have mastered already, instead of knowing which drill comes after another, they just kind of scramble to random drills.

Competition

In a competition setting, coaches should take on new roles valued by players regarding their organizational skills. Participants had three common preferences from their ideal coaches when it came to tasks and responsibilities they should be accounting for in game or competition periods. Every game or event should always start with a pre-competition talk, as athletes want to be focused and reminded of any little strategies that may have been worked on in practice, as outlined by Justin: "He's got, name, number,

and position all set up before the game". Following the set up, a coach should provide motivating, correctional guidance when in timeouts or between events, supported by Thomas: "He would have a talk with them before they go on the ice, and when they are on the ice, he will have something to talk about when the period is done". Lastly, a coach should be responsible for implementing proper lineups that allow for healthy and positive team chemistry: "In a tournament, they put on random players with random players that don't work as well together, when an organized coach would put on these two who work really well together" (Matthew).

As seen in both practice and competition settings, coaches are constantly observed by athletes when it comes to what they do, how they do it, and how much fun the athlete(s) have while doing it. Coaches should be able to showcase organizational skills to help promote an athlete's life skills. A coach who is always on time, organized, and has an efficient practice is much more preferred to a youth athlete rather than showing up late, not having knowledge in the sport, as well as making up the practice and stumbling as they go along. In competition, coaches should have pre-, in-, and post-game speech(es) for their players based on the actual competition (technical or strategic). Lastly, it is up to the coach to understand who works better together and who should play beside whom. Even in individual sports, a coach can pair partners together or understand what works for the athlete and what does not. Understanding each athlete can help develop social support and other categories that grow trust and a positive coach-athlete relationship. The quality and response of instruction and encouragement should advance "sporting IQ" and developmental skills that should be trained regardless of game-related performance(s).

4.3.2.2 Game-Irrelevant.

Results from youth athletes in the study showed they preferred their ideal coaches to not only acknowledge them socially, but initiate conversation that may not even be related to the sport. Smith and Smoll (1978) define general communication and game-irrelevant behaviours as interactions coaches have with their athletes that are unrelated to the actual competition. This could be time before practice, in between games or competitions at a tournament, or even just seeing them outside of the sport environment (for example, at the grocery store or a local event). Athletes were asked how their preferred coach would speak to them and act outside of their sport, and, from their responses, developed preferences that ranged from a coach's style and appearance to making their athletes feel calm and appreciated.

4.3.2.2.1 Authentic.

Athletes who participated in the qualitative interview process suggested their preference was for a coach to act and speak "normal". For an athlete, "normal" communication simply encourages a coach to act as they would in any regular setting. Athletes want to see a coach who acts the same both inside and outside of the sport environment. This was represented in the quote below.

> I don't think they should treat you any differently outside of practice, like, they should speak with the same politeness as they do in practice – so it shouldn't be different. (Emma)

Coaches also need to be able to forget previous results while at competition, especially when games or events may occur frequently over the course of a day or weekend.

Athletes believe that since they (personally) have moved on, coaches should be following (or promoting) suit, as shown in the following quote.

> Like a casual guy, but he would be focused in the game. But after the game in the hotel he would be like one of the dads with his kid too, sitting by the pool. And he would talk to us. (Tim)

Although normal might seem like a broad term, youth athletes prefer their coaches to have conversations that they would within their respective sport environment(s). Athletes who come across their coach outside of their sport (for example, at the grocery store or a local event), want their coach to at least acknowledge and check up on them and how they are doing. Even if it is just a general greeting, the quotes below show similar preferences to a coach who shows the ability to engage in general communication.

> [The coach would be] Happy to see you, because if we're not having practice, he would probably want to see his players, to make sure that they are all okay, right. (Justin)

> If I were him I would say hi and be like how was your day and stuff, and, I would want him to be like that. (Mark)

A coach who shows enthusiasm when seeing their athlete(s) outside of the sport they coach them in can make them feel appreciated, supported, and part of the team or group. If for some reason the coach ignores the athlete and the athlete sees that, there could be further implications in terms of trust and enjoyment of sport participation. For an athlete, a coach who can have a casual conversation with them un-related to the actual sport can help develop other areas of both the *LSS* and *CBAS* categories.

4.3.2.2.2 Humorous.

Youth athletes recommended that their ideal coach have a sense of humour. A coach who could make their athletes laugh, smile, and feel part of the team helped them relate and associate more with their coach; rather than someone with a title or authoritarian position where they may still feel intimidated and lack confidence. Some players (more specifically boys) preferred coaches who even included athletes in on the joke(s). Tim preferred them to be, "Like a funny guy, I like it when they are funny. And they all can be funny. They are all capable of that" while Scott said: "Maybe just make a joke or make fun of us, as a team". As this was a trait that was commonly recognized amongst youth athletes, it is important to understand that children participate in youth sport to have fun, build life skills, and participate in physical activity (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001). For a young person to recognize that they prefer coaches to have an outgoing sense of humour away from the sport and can be honest and reliable illustrates how children can grasp coaching behaviours at such a young age. It is important for coaches to build on personal traits and characteristics that athletes perceive and allow them to trust, respect, and respond to in a positive, developmental manner.

4.3.3 Class 3: Social Support.

As both *Social Support* and *Coaching Gender* classes were created based on the interpretation of coded data, inductive analysis was used to provide new themes to support and add to existing literature (As shown previously in Figure 4.2). The addition of these classes was based off both integration from elements of the *LSS* (Social Support), as well as previous literature suggesting other factors of coaching preferences (Coaching Gender).

Athletes provided data that suggested both the value of trust and credibility are essential to help coaches develop rapport with their athlete(s). It is important to note that for trust to develop over time, coaches should authenticate these relationships by continuing support and use the advocated tools to do that. Although no significant differences were found in *Phase 1* of the study when it came to social support, themes were created within conversations that took place throughout interviews that built on coaching literature by adding social support strategies and gender-oriented preferences.

4.3.3.1 Strategies for Increased Social Support.

Throughout coding procedures, three consistent suggestions were thematized from respondents' preferences and what coaches should attempt to provide to their athlete(s) while regarding social support. It is important to recognize that each characteristic has no progressive order and that the continuous development of each can simultaneously help endorse other themes coded throughout *Phase 2* for both team and individual sport athletes. Note that *Social Support* is defined as coaches who foster interpersonal relationships and promote a positive group atmosphere with their athlete(s) (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980).

4.3.3.1 Communication.

Communication was a consistent preference of the athletes. They wanted a coach who was approachable to a youth athlete that would allow for more fluid communication and personal interaction(s); leading to an increased sense of trust between both player and coach. Throughout interviews, every participant supported the idea of trusting their coach to further enhance their relationship both in and out of the respective sport. Participants

also supported this through the quantitative data by rating “Coaches who encourage(s) athletes to talk and trust to him/her” as the highest Social Support category (*M*= 4.15). The following quotes by Emma and John (Team Sport) demonstrate preferences athletes have of their coaches through communication: “I feel that they would be able to ask a question that I would be able to ask them back”; and, “It’s just easier to talk to somebody that you know well, and someone other than your family”. Karen (Individual Sport) also stated:

> Because I know for sure that my ideal coach is someone I can trust, because they are there for everyone on the team, but also care about us personally.

Taken together, athletes who can establish an effective communication pathway with their coach(es) can continue to build trust and feel comfortable interacting with an older or alternate figure in their life.

4.3.3.2 Compassion.

The capacity and preference for a coach who is patient and open to hearing athletes’ problems supports the view that their role as a coach not only focuses on providing leadership and guidance in the sport, but also as an alternative resource or outlet away from their primary family, teachers, or circle of friends. Compassion was supported by Ethan, who felt: “If you are struggling in something, and your parents or friends can’t help you, then you might as well ask someone else to help you”. A coach who makes herself or himself available to assist athletes with their personal problem(s) may allow players to feel less

nervous about approaching a coach regarding any issues they may be dealing with on or off the court or field. Mitch said: “If you don’t feel safe talking to your parents or someone in your family, he could be like a different person out of your family that you could talk to and feel safe”. The increased sense of compassion from their coach overall can lead to a greater development of trust between coach and athlete.

Overall, a coach who shows signs of empathy, kindness, and understanding towards their athletes can build a greater connection of trust to allow a youth athlete to feel more comfortable and welcomed within the sport environment, “Because if the coach doesn’t know anything about you, then she won’t be able to help you as much” (Karen). Compassion characteristics were supported through the quantitative data, as participants preferred a coach who sometimes expressed affection for their athletes and expected the same in return (*M*= 3.03). As well, a coach who helps members of the group settle any problems they are dealing with was preferred over a coach who does not (*M*= 3.48).

4.3.3.3 Community.

The ability for coaches to develop a sense of community by building relationships with their athlete(s) can lay a strong foundation for enhancing sport experiences for all involved. Building connections with the team and/or individual can allow a coach to encourage friendships and help create a more positive culture. A coach who can establish a sense of community enables connections to be made with athletes (both athlete-coach and athlete-athlete relationships) but can also build character, competence, autonomy, and life skills that may not be readily possible without a strong, healthy, and positive coach-

athlete relationship (Jõesaar, Hein, & Hagger, 2012). The created culture and/or sense of togetherness was supported by participants below:

> Maybe a get together for the team, for example, a bowling night, so we all go together for a bowling night to help the team build and know each other. (Matthew)

> I'm not sure why, but it makes him feel friendlier and more helpful so they can, they can sort of leaving you without just saying good job and like keep going to other players and stuff like that. For example, treating you fairly so they know a little bit more about you – so one day you can return the favor and ask them something. (Mitch)

Participants believed that a coach who attempts to build a sense of togetherness can have a positive effect on their experience. The opportunity for a youth athlete to experience inclusion within a team (team-sport) or even organization (team or individual sport) can help reinforce their acceptance in a group-oriented community. The sense of community was supported through the *Leadership Scale for Sport* by participants preferring coaches who encouraged friendships between members. Although inviting athletes to his/her home was ranked extremely low, the general interpretation of the question may have been taken out of context from its intended meaning. When the meaning of the specific question (engaging in group activities and bonding events) was explained in the interview process, all participants preferred their coach to organize and participate in such events.

4.3.3.2 Gender Comparison.

When it came to social support, qualitative data analysis suggested that there were some perceived differences between males and females, especially when it came to social support and how coaches interact with their athlete(s). The major difference that was noted was when coaches should engage in an athlete's personal life outside of the respective sport. Although not consistent with previous results in the study that suggested there was no difference between males and females within *Social Support*, common disparities were categorized from discussion through interviews. Males suggested the need for their coach to regularly take an interest in their life outside of sport. In contrast, several females suggested that they only expected their coach to take an interest in their life when it was effecting their sport performance, participation motivation, or attendance. Several males who responded with the following specific statements about their coach's engagement in social support:

> I bet I would want one [a coach who takes an interest in their life] because if something was going on maybe even family wise I don't think I would like to talk to my parents about that. And friends ... my age they can't do much, they are 13/14 years old and can't help. But if I have a coach who would ask and listen that would be good, and if he would listen and help me and give me some opinions. (Tim)

> Yeah, like how was your weekend, your Christmas holidays, how are you doing if you are playing another sport, how you are doing with that, are you able to come more often, and all that stuff. (Daniel)

All but one male preferred their coach to take an interest in their life, concluding that having a coach who takes an interest in their life outside sport as well as have

conversation not specific-sport related (the one they are working together in) would help them connect more and continue to develop trust and legitimacy with them.

When it came to female preferences, information provided was opposite to the males' responses. A majority either did not want their coach to take an interest in their life outside of sport or only intervene when it was affecting their performance specifically. Most females who participated in the interviews had both male and female coaches in their life, though one had only a female coach (no male before). This is recognized to confirm that athletes were experiencing both genders and the low social support was not due to imbalanced coach-athlete gender numbers. Some responses are shown below to support the above statement:

> I think it would be weird, because like that's not really, because he should be focusing on hockey, not my other sports. (Laura – Team Sport)

> But let's say something going on with your family at home, I think if you have to speak to them shortly about that and say that's why, I might be acting differently and they should know about that, but that's something you might not want them to know extremely. (Emma – Team Sport)

> Well in a certain degree, so if something is going on in your life that is affecting your game, then they should be involved in that... but not if it's like school or something like that. (Emily – Individual Sport)

Even though there were no significant differences in this study recorded from *Phase 1,* there is support that males tended to have a higher preference of social support than females. Although this could be due to the larger number of male coaches in youth sport,

social support for athletes should not be perceived with a negative connotation. If an athlete tells their coach they are off to see a hockey game that weekend (e.g. Toronto Maple Leafs), a coach should take initiative to follow up the next time at practice. Being able to authenticate the conversation and show that they care or even remember is one step to continue to build a stronger coach-athlete relationship.

4.3.4 Class 4: Gender Preference of Coach.

Data were organized based off each participant's response, whether it was preferring the gender of their coach or not having a preference at all (male or female). Themes were created based off not having or having a preference of coaching gender. To maintain consistency with their previous answers, data were recovered from each participant's original survey from *Phase 1* to ensure that their preference did not change between the two phases (which none did).

4.3.4.1 No Preference (Did Not Matter Gender of Coach).

The number of participants who did not have a preference of their coach's gender were similar in terms of the number of participants who did not report a preference in *Phase 1*. Reasons for not having a preference of a coach's gender was categorized into two themes. The generic belief of a coach's responsibilities, duties, and position were mentioned, as well as having a positive experience in the past with both genders that enabled a mutual preference. Athletes who showed uncertainty to a coach's gender brought a philosophical approach to their reasoning(s), as outlined by Scott: "A coach is a coach" and Jane: "As long as they know the game well enough to coach it to us then it doesn't matter what gender".

The preference of gender was consistent with previous literature when it came to youth sport. Martin et al., (1999) concluded that youth ages 10-14 did not have a preference of their coach's gender. An athlete who does not prefer a specific coaching gender truly believed that all people are equal if they can complete the same job technically: "It shouldn't really matter if they are a girl or a boy- it's really the way how they coach that matters" (Megan – Individual Sport).

Another reason for youth athletes not preferring their coach's gender had to do with previous, positive experiences that already took place in their life with male and female influential figures.

> She was actually one of the best coaches I've ever had. And most of the guy coaches that I've had, have been pretty good coaches, so I'm not going to judge them. (Tim)

> Well because they could equally be as good coaching because I've had a lot of, well I like males mostly for volleyball, but then I've had a couple of really good female coaches for basketball. (Mitch)

A reason why most participants have little preference of their coach's gender could be based on the number of interactional figures in their lives at such a young age. On average, participants from *Phase 1* reported that they have been trained by more than three head coaches in the past two years alone (M= 3.27). Due to the number of teachers, parents, and other significant figures, it could be presumed that a healthy balance of both males and females have already been a major part of their lives, and supported their belief that gender does not resemble much importance to them when it comes to coaching

preferences. The minimal preference of coaching gender from females is also consistent to previous studies conducted, which supports that female athletes ages 10-14 have minimal preference of their coach's gender (Martin, Dale, & Jackson, 2001).

4.3.4.2 Preference of Gender.

The number of participants who preferred their coach's gender were similar in terms of the number of participants who had a preference in *Phase 1*. Those who reported a specific preference of gender in their sport had similar reasons to those who did not provide a preference, such as previous positive experiences with both male and female coaches. However, when it came to specific preference of gender in relation to the gender of the athlete, it was recognized that youth athletes that have a specific preference of the gender of their coach also show higher preferences than those who do not care about their coach (gender). Those who had a preference of gender suggested a similar theme from above of benefiting from a previous, positive experience; something that made them enjoy their time and support their ability to decide to even have a preference. John believed that: "I've always had one, and always liked having a male coach". Preference based on a previous, encouraging experience is supported below by Matthew:

> I like a coach to be hard on you, but not hard to the limit where like they are just screaming and yelling at you right? And that's only happened with guy coaches, so yea.

The second theme that was created based on youth athletes having a preference of their coach's gender was idealized by having a negative experience with a previous coach; something that may have shunned them away from preferring a coach of that gender again. This can be seen in the quotes below:

> They are easier ... like they are easier on us than males because they are more hard working, and they are more like easier on us. Easier like in conditioning and just different. (Emma)

> I prefer a guy, because whenever I was ever coached by a girl they were never hard enough on you. (Matthew)

Participants who had a preference of their coach's gender each had reasoning for their selection. More importantly, it seemed that their preference was based on previous experience alone, whether positive or negative. For a positive experience, it may have only come from multiple coaches of the same gender; while a negative experience could have come from one individual or event that took place that they still remember. Coaches have a major impact on an athlete's life both in and out of sport and it only takes one coach to make a massive impact on their life. That impact can heavily influence an athlete's preference from what they want from their coach; including their gender to establish a more trusting and connecting relationship (Sharma, 2015).

4.3.4.3 Preference of Coach Gender in Relation to Athlete Gender.

When it came to having a preference of specific coaching gender, boys who preferred male coaches had higher preferences in categories of *Positive Feedback*, *Social Support*, and *Training and Instruction* than those who did not have a preference about

what gender their coach was (Only one boy preferred female coach so it was omitted from this section). As well, the preference for autocratic behaviour was slightly higher than those who did not care what gender their coach was (although still seldom). This bolsters previous research that a stronger connection could be formed with a coach the same gender as their athletes (when it comes to boys specifically) (Martin, Dale, and Jackson, 2001; Bolkiah & Terry, 2001).

Due to the low number of females who participated in the second phase of the study (6), it was to difficult to accurately differentiate and compare those who had a coaching gender preference to those who did not have on at all. However, from the data that was obtained, girls who mentioned that they favoured a specific gender in general (male or female; opposed to not mattering) showed higher preferences in all five categories; which could suggest that athletes who do know what gender they want may increase their knowledge of preference to different coaching behaviours and help them understand more what they want to get out of sport specifically.

4.4 Phase Two: Qualitative Discussion

Following data analysis, three surrounding themes were shaped in response to what youth athletes want from their coach throughout gender, age, and type of sport (team vs individual). Histaka (2015) found that players with a stronger coach-athlete relationship were much more well-rounded and influenced by their coach than those who had poor coach-athlete relationships. This could relate to the number of athletes who dropout at such a young age when not supported by their coaches, implying, that coaches should be putting even more time into athletes who are struggling or less socially inclusive. This is supported by Wilson and Stephens (2007); Hoigaard, Jones, and Peters (2008); who

expressed that athletes reported frustration while coaches ended drills early before completion, showed constant disapproval, and portrayed a sense of failure and inferiority.

4.4.1 Be Knowledgeable and Keep Feedback Simple.

Athletes want a coach to provide specific, honest, and goal oriented feedback in response to desirable performances and mistakes, while reinforcing individual and/or group reward structure(s). Youth reported that their preference of a coach who can show knowledge of the sport, technical cues, and communicate properly can earn the trust, respect, and develop a stronger connection between coach and athlete(s). This supports Martin et al. (1999); Allen and Howe (1998) with recommendations for coaches to promote athletes learning new skills, feel achievement and competitive challenge, and having a coach with knowledge and participation abilities. Athletes within this age group identified coaches who provide “fake feedback” do more harm than good. This builds on findings from Stein, Bloom, and Sabiston (2012) that mentioned that athletes after a mistake would rather a coach to provide minimal feedback opposed to fake or large quantity of words following. Coaches need to be able to communicate in ways that athletes understand that they are doing something wrong and not always told they are doing a good job. Praising effort may be an option when a result based action is not completed but again only if it is evident. As athletes get older, being honest may result in feedback that may be perceived as more negative or constructive – which is still more preferred than a coach who ignores mistakes and does not recognize lack of effort.

Previous youth sport research has summarized that all athletes are different and develop at different rates based on their interactions, environment, and self-development (Smith & Smoll, 2012). This current study advises that youth athletes want to be

recognized regardless of their associated skill level, even if others are being rewarded for it. This could mean that coaches should explain their reward reasoning with their teams early in the season by including the ability to reward others for different achievements and that everyone interprets success differently. The current results do not support the findings of Smith, Balaguer, and Duda (2005), as athletes reported that they understood the different recognitions coaches provided based on their own competence levels while considering their surrounding peers; therefore, they did not need constant communication and rewarding. Due to the acknowledgement and understanding of magnitude of rewards and expectations of different ranges based on different variables, actions coaches make that are not consistent or do not make sense to youth athletes may confuse them and have them over/under value their contribution or performance to either the team or their own abilities (Hassell et al., 2010; May, Els, & Viljoen, 2014). Understandably, emotions in sport may bring out different responses based on score, time left, or other factors that may evoke different reactions. It is important for coaches to understand the different "successful performance(s)" of their sport and apply rewards accordingly (both process and result successes).

4.4.2 Create a Culture and Fall in Love with the Process.

Athletes in the study reported the need to feel included by the team, group, and organization regardless of their own skill level compared to their peers. Feeling included can lead to more athletes buying into the development process, trusting their coach, worrying less about playing time and result over the opportunity, and building intangible relationships (Morgan, 2006). This view is supported by Gould et al., (2007), who recognized a coach's ability to develop their players as people and developing

relationships with athletes was a building block for fostering an athlete's ability to develop. Coaches should immerse themselves in the culture of the team and/or organization to get athlete(s) to buy into the overall process and group rather than a ranking or specific outcome. This is supported by Shields, Bredeimer, LaVoi, Power (2005); Reinboth, Duda, Ntoumanis (2004); Riley and Smith (2011), who found that building a strong sporting culture can lead to an increase in an athlete's self-confidence, acceptance, and desire to participate in sport.

Results also showed that athletes prefer their ideal coach to be compassionate and develop a sense of community. Support from Carson and Gould (2010) and Koh et al., (2009) reported that athletes reflecting on youth careers appreciated coaches who took them for more than a season and demonstrated and explained different facets of sport that allowed them to feel more included and appreciative of the experience. Linkages to the community and development of life skills can help foster a greater appreciation for physical activity through sport. Athletes believe that a coach who attempts to build a sense of togetherness can have a positive effect on their sporting experience, while reinforcing their acceptance in a group-oriented community (Turnman, 2003). Support from Martin, Dale, and Jackson (2001) provided data from kids who preferred a coach that provided time for athletes to develop team spirit and friendships while feeling affiliated with the team orientation and organization. Additionally, Ewing and Seefeldt (1996) showed that youth athletes preferred coaches who joke around and have fun, which supports the current study where coaches should have a sense of humor, make their athletes laugh and smile, and act "normal". If an athlete can identify a coach having fun,

being invested, and brining passion to their coaching style, there is a greater chance of them replicating and buying into the overall process.

4.4.3 Use Sport as a Tool for Developing Life Skills.

Athletes from the interviews reported that they prefer their coaches to help build, develop, and reach goals; whether skill-based, performance-based, or focused on a target initiative outside of the sport itself. This is supported through findings by Conroy and Coatesworth (2007) and Koh et al., (2009) that athletes want to be praised for effort, hard work, and decision-making skills regardless of the specific outcome. Although not supported as much by individual sport athletes (compared to team sport), participants reported that conversations coaches can have before practice with their athletes can show that they are invested in them regardless of their role on the team in relation to skill level; which could solve the contrasted argument that kids who perceived their coach spending more time with higher-competent athletes had a lower motivation to participate and higher chance to dropout (Turnman, 2003). Carson and Gould (2010) support reasons for individual goal setting but also recommend that all athletes need their coaches to have some input on setting goals with them, regardless if they are personal or within a team/organizational setting.

In relation to life skills, coaches are identified as role models and mentors to youth in sport and can leave a positive, lasting impact on their athletes (Bloom, Durand-Bush, Shinke, & Salmela, 1998). Results from the present study demonstrate that players prefer a coach who is organized and shows up to every practice and competition on time teaches athletes time management skills; which supports Wilson and Stephens (2007) findings that athletes tend to interpret their coaches' behaviours and react based on them.

If an athlete sees their coach coming in late every practice, how can a coach get mad at instances similar in the future? Coaches who teach kids the skills of the game and understand properly why they do what they do can lead to coaching opportunities or giving back to the community in future years. The current study builds on Morgan's (2006) findings that youth athletes want coaches to emphasize their own sport experiences to better relate to athletes, create pressure situations that may arise in practices and competitions, and challenge players to better themselves; endorsing that coaches should attempt to implement and apply while building their own coaching philosophies and practices. The ability to teach teamwork skills (team sport) and individual development (team/individual sport) in relation to life skills can promote healthy participation and retention, and most importantly, enjoyment of sport and physical activity.

Chapter 5: Methodological Considerations, Implications, Limitations, Future Research

5.1 Mixed Methods Approach

The third and final research question sought to determine if the results were similar in comparison or be different based on online participation (quantitative) and face-to-face interaction (qualitative) regarding youth coaching preferences. While using the *LSS* and *CBAS* as instruments in the study, T*raining and Instruction*, *Positive Feedback,* and *Autocratic Behaviour* showed similarities in data collection, *Democratic Behaviour* showed no extra support, while *Social Support* provided suggestions that would most likely raise the preference for that specific coaching trait.

Between both data collection procedures, it was clear that both positive feedback and training and instruction were valued and highly preferred by youth athletes. Quantitative data supported previous literature while qualitative interviews provided extra information about how coaches can continue to build their skills through these categories. In terms of feedback and instruction, coaches who provide specific, honest, and goal-oriented feedback are more likely to connect with their athlete(s). How they respond to a desirable performance as well as mistakes differ in variations and are based on environment (practice vs. competition) and reward magnitudes (small, medium, and large rewards). A coach should be knowledgeable in their practices but show skills such as organization to develop trust and accountability with their athletes.

Autocratic behaviour was the lowest ranked preference of coaches in the Phase 1 data collection as well as within interviews. The only difference that resulted from interviews was the understanding that athletes prefer a coach implement an autocratic coaching style

within the team or group when necessary. Although not preferred, the questions did not provide autocratic variables that might be considered beneficial, and seemed anything regarding an autocratic approach came with a negative connotation or perception. Further development in this category might raise the preference of autocratic behaviour if questions included beneficial behaviours such as: completion of tasks in a sense of urgency or stress, creating lineups or heats for competition, and explaining the whole drill before getting athletes confirmation of understanding; Even due to the skill level, athletic maturity, and IQ of youth athletes can require the coach to make executive decisions for the benefit of the group/team.

While discussing democratic behaviour, the *LSS* provided athletes sometimes wanted their coach to include them in the decision-making process; more specifically with individual sport athletes. Interviews did not add any extra support as the *CBAS* did not cover coaching behaviour in relation to democratic qualities.

Lastly, social support was preferred sometimes by athletes, however, interviews provided themes that invest more into social support from an overarching perspective. Athletes do prefer their coach to take an interest in their life outside of sport (Males more in general and females only if affecting performance as found in interviews) but identify their desire for coaches to include the group, team or organization in all of it. A coach who builds a positive culture with their team or organization allows the athlete(s) to believe in the development process, as well as the affiliation and identification with the organization. The ability for a coach to successfully foster healthy communication, compassion, and a sense of community within their athlete(s) can assist with the interpersonal relationship with their athletes; where taking interest of other factors outside

of coaching and even sport creates a positive environment. It is recommended that social relationships look to add variables such as inclusion and development of team culture and having a coach who help creates personal goals and philosophies; something that continues to support coaches looking out for the welfare of their athletes. Additionally, the question, *"Invited athletes to his/her home"* can be assumed to be misinterpreted by the participants throughout the entire study. It was ranked the lowest preference of a coach in the *Social Support* section of the questionnaire (*M*= 2.04), but when explained the actual definition, – a coach who plans team bonding events and activities unrelated and away from the sport – every participant in the interview (17/17) almost laughed because it was not what they interpreted. Subsequently, they said they would all prefer a coach who initiated team bonding activities away from practice and competition(s).

5.2 Limitations

The present study had some limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the balance of participants in both *Phase 1* and *Phase 2* of this study could potentially skew results and interpretations. Most *Phase 1* athletes were female (72/116) while the interview process involved more males (11/17), potentially not accurately portraying the entire data population. As well, the balance between female-team (44), female-individual (28), male-team (36), and male-individual (8) were not sensible to evaluate male-individual sports in comparison with the other three categories. Following, the confusion between perception and preference for a youth athlete in both the online questionnaire and interview could have inconsistencies. Athletes absolutely have preferences based on previous experiences and previous coaches. In *Phase 1* however, it would be tough to reiterate this to a youth athlete filling out a survey online. Although they may have a

preference, the ability to think of their coach now and directly compare it to what they may like or dislike could affect the reliability of the data. The confusion was better managed in *Phase 2* as the primary researcher steered back the conversation if preferences became memories of what their coach was currently doing. The final limitation was due to the number of team and individual sport athletes. Not only did the numbers not balance (team – 80, individual – 36), but the potential of an athlete playing more than one sport and more than one type of sport (team and individual) is possible and was not accounted for. It was recommended by participants that the sport they selected at the beginning of the study was to be answered for throughout the study; however even through semi-structured interviews some participants tended to jump between team and individual sports.

5.3 Implications for Coach Education

Keeping in mind the limitations in the study, the results have provided athletes' preferences about their youth sport coaches regarding their leadership behaviour throughout motivational strategies, instructional behaviour, and decision-making styles. The mixed method study also provides observations of youth athletes' preference to coaches' spontaneous and reactive behaviours. The addition of literature for coaches to be honest in their positive feedback and training and instruction aides in both categories already high preference; while communication, compassion, and building a sense of community encompasses the preference for occasional social support. Although findings did not support many differences in preferences in youth sport between age groups and genders, the preference of a more democratic and inclusive approach with individual sport athletes was recognized while there was little preference for autocratic behaviour.

Additionally, coaches who work with kids in the current age group (Ages 10-14) should understand that they are most likely participating in other sports with other influential figures (coaches) and should support and foster the identification of coaching preferences. Additionally, future research could look at the quality of coaching behaviour interactions with their athlete(s) as member characteristics such as age are not as significant. Overall, coaching education strategies should be suggested to identify coaches' preferences with a team or individual at the start of the season and begin to build a trusting, affiliated relationship where athletes feel their contribution is a part of the process towards personal, athletic, and performance goal(s).

5.4 Future Directions

Although minimal research has looked at such a young age group in a Canadian context, results show similar patterns and trends that athletes at a young age do not have significant preferences but show slight likings that influence their sport experience satisfaction. Because this was an exploratory study to identify coaching preferences of youth athletes in a) An previously minimal researched age bracket (Ages 10-14), b) In a Canadian context, and c) Using a mixed-method approach for the first time; it is necessary to further develop and identify research that can build on coaching preferences of youth sport athletes. Because no differences were found between gender and age group, the study may have to be conducted with athletes competing at a higher level or older age group; as it has been shown that athletes develop different preferences as they grow older (Age 14+).

As this study brought up to date the use of the *LSS* in a Canadian context, it would be interesting to update the previous study from the United States (Martin et al., 1999).

This could help perhaps identify any similarities or differences in youth sport coaching preference values between Canada and the United States. Since studies using the *LSS* have seldom looked at athletes ages 10-14, the ability to examine athletes coaching preferences in different cultures and countries may bring forward more informative discussion for coach education and specialization based on location and type of sport. Because a statistical significance was found in greater preference with individual sport athletes regarding *Democratic Behaviour*, a further study with individual sport athletes could help identify strategies they prefer to use and implement in their training with their coach(es) to better individual sport training.

Lastly, current research supports suggestions by Pyun, Koh, and Wang (2010) that there may be different relations of individual *LSS* variables (specifically *Social Support*) within the specific type of sport (team and individual), which could be further investigated with all *LSS* categories. Team sports that require coaching interaction based off style of play and reward frequency (Volleyball and Tennis vs Soccer and Hockey) as well as individual (Tennis vs Track and Field event, Cross Country) may establish different athletes' preferences regarding coaching behaviours.

The purpose of this study was to identify youth coaching preferences when referring to leadership and behaviour styles. The value of seeking youth preferences of their coaches and their influence in sport at such a young age can help provide strategies, behaviours, and qualities for coaches to utilize and adopt in their future coaching practices to promote sport and retention regarding dropout rates and lack of physical activity. Although little information was established through quantitative measures, interviews provided in-depth, rich conclusions that provide a concrete and specific

recommendations for coaches to develop positive, sustainable relationships with athletes in both personal and sporting senses.

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Appendices

A. Original REB Approval

Brock University
Research Ethics Board
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE: 8/5/2016

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: SULLIVAN, Phillip - Kinesiology

FILE: 15-319 - SULLIVAN

TYPE: Masters Thesis/Project STUDENT: Matthew Ragogna
SUPERVISOR: Phillip Sullivan

TITLE: Early Adolescent Athlete's Preferred Leadership Styles and Behavior of Youth Sport Coaches; An Observation Between Team and Individual Sports

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: NEW Expiry Date: 8/31/2017

The Brock University Social Sciences Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Clearance granted from 8/5/2016 to 8/31/2017.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 8/31/2017. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved: [redacted]

Sandra Peters, Acting Chair
Social Sciences Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.

B. REB Modification Approval

Brock University
Research Ethics Office
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE: August 29, 2016

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: SULLIVAN, Phillip - Kinesiology

FILE: 15-319 - SULLIVAN

TYPE: Masters Thesis/Project STUDENT: Matthew Ragogna
SUPERVISOR: Phillip Sullivan

TITLE: Early Adolescent Athlete's Preferred Leadership Styles and Behavior of Youth Sport Coaches; An Observation Between Team and Individual Sports

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: MODIFICATION Expiry Date: 8/31/2017

The Brock University Social Sciences Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement.

Modification: Parents will be asked if they would be interested in receiving information on/being contacted in the future regarding a follow-up study.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 8/31/2017. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms.

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved: [redacted]

Jan Frijters, Chair
Social Science Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.

C. Demographic Questionnaire

1. Are you a boy or a girl? (Options: Boy, Girl)
2. How old are you right now? (Options: 10,11,12,13,14)
3. Please type in the sport that you participate in. (Option: Open Box to Comment)
4. What level of sport do you play for the sport that you just typed in? (Options: Recreational, House League or School Level, Club/Rep)
5. Have you ever had a boy coach? (Options: Yes, No)
6. Have you ever had a girl coach? (Options: Yes, No)
7. What gender would you prefer your coach to be? (Options: Boy, Girl, does not Matter)
8. How old would you prefer your coach to be? (Options: Teenager (16-20), 21-30, 31-40,41-50, 50+, Does Not Matter)
9. How tall would you prefer your coach to be? (Options: Same height as you, Shorter than you, Taller than you, does not matter)

D. Original Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) Questionnaire

Using the following scale, please click a circle from 1-5 to indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements regarding YOUR coach.

1 Never	2 Seldom (25% of Time)	3 Occasionally (50% of Time)	4 Often (75% of Time)	5 Always

1.	Sees to it that every athlete is working to his/her capacity.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Explains to each athlete the techniques and tactics of the sport.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Pays special attention to correction athletes mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Make sure that his/her part in the team is understood by all the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Instructs every athlete individually in the skills of the sport.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Figures ahead what should be done.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Explains to every athlete what he/she should do and what he/she should not do.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Expects every athlete to carry out their assignment to the last detail.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Points out each athlete's strengths and weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Gives specific instruction to each athlete as to what he/she should do in every situation.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Sees to it that efforts are coordinated.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Explains how each athlete's contribution fits into the total picture.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Specifies in detail what is expected of each athlete.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Asks for opinion of athletes on strategy for specific competitions.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Gets group approval on important matters before going ahead.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Let's his/her athletes share in the decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Encourages athletes to make suggestions for ways of conducting practices.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Lets the group set their own goals.	1	2	3	4	5

19.	Lets the athletes try their own way even if they make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Asks for the opinion of athletes in important coaching matters.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Lets the athletes work at their own speed.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Lets the athletes decide on the plays to be used in the game.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Works relatively independent of the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Does not explain his/her action(s).	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Refuses to compromise a point.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Keeps to himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Speaks a manner not to be questioned.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Helps the athletes with their personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Helps the members of the group settle their conflicts.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Looks out for personal welfare of the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Does personal favors for the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Expresses affection he/she feels towards the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Encourages athletes to confide in him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Encourages close and informal relations with athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Invites athletes to his/her home.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Compliments an athlete for their performance in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Tells an athlete when he/she does a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Sees that an athlete is rewarded for a good performance.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Expresses affection when an athlete plays well.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Gives credit when credit is due.	1	2	3	4	5

E. Modified Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) Questionnaire

Using the following scale, please click a circle from 1-5 to indicate your level of agreement with each of the statements regarding YOUR coach.

1 Never	2 A Little (25% of Time)	3 Sometimes (50% of Time)	4 Most of the Time (75% of Time)	5 Always

1.	Makes sure that every athlete is working their hardest.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Explains to each athlete the skills of the sport.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Pays special attention to correcting athletes' mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Make sure that all athletes understand their part.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Instructs every athlete individually in the skills of the sport.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Plans ahead what should be done.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Explains to every athlete what they should do and what they should not do.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Expects every athlete to do their job.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Points out each athlete's strengths and weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Gives specific instruction to each athlete as to what he/she should do in every situation.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Makes sure that the team works well together.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Explains how each athlete's job contributes to team.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Identifies in detail what is expected of each athlete.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Asks for opinion of athletes on strategy for specific competitions.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Gets group approval on important matters before going ahead.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Lets' his/her athletes share in the decision making.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Encourages athletes to make suggestions for ways of practicing.	1	2	3	4	5

18.	Lets' the group set their own goals.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Lets' the athletes try their own way even if they make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Asks for the opinion of athletes in important coaching matters.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Lets' the athletes work at their own speed.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Lets' the athletes decide on the plays to be used in the game.	1	2	3	4	5
~~23.~~	~~Works independent of the athletes.~~	~~1~~	~~2~~	~~3~~	~~4~~	~~5~~
24.	Does not explain his/her action(s).	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Refuses to work together on something.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Keeps to himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Does not like to be questioned.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Helps the athletes with their personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Helps the members of the group settle their disagreements.	1	2	3	4	5
~~30.~~	~~Looks out for well-being of the athletes.~~	~~1~~	~~2~~	~~3~~	~~4~~	~~5~~
~~31.~~	~~Does personal favours for the athletes.~~	~~1~~	~~2~~	~~3~~	~~4~~	~~5~~
32.	Expresses affection he/she feels towards the athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Encourages athletes to talk and trust to him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Encourages friendships with athletes.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Invites athletes to his/her home.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Compliments an athlete for their performance in front of others.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Tells an athlete when he/she does a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Sees that an athlete is rewarded for a good performance.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Expresses a positive attitude when an athlete plays well.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Gives praise when it is due.	1	2	3	4	5

F. Modifications to Leadership Scale for Sports

(1) ‘Sees to it’ and ‘capacity’ were removed as words were above grade level and non-comprehensive for majority of kids in explanation. Changed to ‘makes sure’ and hardest’.

(2) ‘Techniques and tactics’ was changed to ‘skills’, as both sections are skills needed to understand the sport.

(4) Just rearranged the wording of sentence but all exact words have been used.

(6) Remove ‘Figures’ and change with ‘Plans’ – just a synonym that is better understood by children in this specific age range.

(7) Small his/her swap for ‘they’.

(8) ‘Carry out their assignment to the last detail’ has been removed as the words could not be explained and understood by almost all participants in pilot test (4/5). Changed to ‘do their job’, as the it is similar explanations for the previous sentence.

(11) ‘Sees to it that efforts are coordinated’ has completely been removed from survey and changed too ‘Make sure the team works well together’. This was changed due to the poor explanation and understanding of the “efforts” coaches make and what they are coordinating.

(12) ‘The total picture’ has been changed to what an athlete’ role “contributes to the team”. The overall picture encompasses the contribution one makes to the overall goals of the group, and feel this adjustment represents that while being more comprehendible.

(13) ‘Specifies’ changed to identifies. Word selection change that was understood greater by both teachers and pilot test participants.

(17) Removed ‘conducting’, as running practice itself is enough to justify what the coach is doing.

(25) Removed ‘compromises on a point’ as most kids did not understand what the coach was refusing (specifically). Interchanged with ‘Work together on something’, as a point of reference is still something a coach does not work on with athletes.

(27) ‘Speaks in a manner’ was confusing for kids as they did not understand what that meant in a tense that was referring to the coach personally. Changed to ‘does’, as in a sentence it is easier to comprehend a coach ‘does not like to be questioned’.

(29) ‘Their conflicts’ had kids thinking that coach would split up fights only, and why they say that their team never gets into fights. Changed to disagreements because kids understood that as two or more people just arguing over multiple possibilities of things – and still understood the sentence.

(33) ‘Confide’ removed for ‘talk and trust’, just to give another synonym that kids understand. Every kid as well as teachers/professionals in academia suggested a change for this sentence.

(34) ‘Close and informal relations’ has been changed with friendships, as recommended by both teachers and academic professors. No kids from the test pilot understood what informal relations meant until explained and provided with an example.

(39) The choice to replace ‘affection’ with positive attitude in this question and not (32) was based on the type of sentence and category it falls under. Affection was seen by kids and teachers as a denotation of relationship, bonding, and togetherness. Under the social support category, this type of relationship makes sense to keep in. For this section (Positive Feedback), the focus on positive attitude of the coach is more relatable than affection.

(40) No kids understood what ‘credit is due’ meant, so the words were changed with praise and only mentioned once. Giving praise when due was better understood and explained by participants once altered from original.

(23), (30), (31) have been removed after full consideration. Run through experts in both academic and applied field. 2 elementary school teachers as well as two professors at Brock University have reviewed and suggested modifications. Lastly, five children ranging in ages 10-14 (3M, 2F) participated in a one-on-one, in-person meeting where the questions were discussed and explained by both primary researcher and participant for more modifications. Focus was not on the meaning, but understanding of the words. It was determined that the removal of these questions would not significantly impact an athletes’ perception and preference of their sports coach.

Overall, minor modifications will be adjusted on Survey Monkey to have a better sentence structure and flow. For example, an athlete reading the title of a sentence would say … Would you like your coach to – “Make sure you are working your hardest”. The sentence is structured in a way so the athlete/participant can properly understand the past/future tense immediately.

Total number of questions (Original versus Revised):

Training and Instruction: 13 – 0 = (13)
Democratic Behaviour: 9 – 0 = (9)
Autocratic Behaviour: 5 – 1 = (4)
Social Support: 8 – 2 = (6)
Positive Feedback: 5 – 0 = (5)
Total: 40 – 3 = 37 Questions

G. Qualitative Interview Script

Interview Guide for Coaching Preferences

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this part of the research study. The whole interview will take approximately 15-20 minutes. Because of your attendance here, I can assume that you have already completed the survey that was available online.

During the interview, I will ask questions that I have written down here and I will be audio recording the session and may take a few notes. You should feel free to skip over, come back to, or change your answer to any question at any time during the interview. As well, if at any time you want to remove yourself from the interview, you may do so by letting the me know. There is nothing wrong with stopping the interview and no data will be collected from it.

Due to the nature of this research project, it has been decided that no transcript will be provided for review for the participant following the interview. Most kids (like yourself) who participate in sport at this age group (10-14) in general have had a parent involved in some way in their coaching experience; something that we want to protect both parties from.

For the purposes of research and evaluation, however, all identifiable data will be anonymized in transcripts and reports; meaning that anything said in the interview will not be associated with your name in publication. Results will be published as, "Participant 1", or in relation to the whole group of participants. Before we begin, do you have any questions about the study, your rights as a participant, or my responsibilities as a researcher?

1. **To start the interview, can you please give me your name and sport that you play?** (Introduction of myself as the primary researcher) Throughout this interview, it is important to keep referring to that sport in that setting.

2. To get your mind working, I want you to think about some instances in your sport related to your coach and let me know some of their behaviours. Remember, this is specifically what your coach does right now in your sport.

- What do you see your coach doing in practice?
- What do you like about practice?
- What do you not like about practice?
- Does the coach participate in any of the activities? If so, like what? If not, what do they do.
- Describe an amazing action/event that you have been a part of in your sport? Why is it your favorite?
-

Now that we have discussed your previous coach and past experiences in your sport… we are going to shift our preferences to an "ideal" coach. For example, if you were starting on a new sport team tomorrow and got to choose what you wanted from your coach, what would you want? (Does that make sense)? – If not, give situation of school. At the end of the year, you want a specific teacher next year because … why?

3. In the survey, you were asked if you have ever had a male or female coach and what gender of coach would you prefer (male, female, or does not matter)? Why?

Now we are going to talk about how you want a coach to respond to a good performance.

4. What would your ideal coach do if they were to reward you or the team when something goes right?
5. How would you feel if a coach ignores or does not respond well to something great you do?

Everybody makes mistakes. Now, let's talk about how coaches should respond to mistakes you may make.
6. What would your ideal coach do if you made a mistake in practice? (say and do)
7. What would your ideal coach do if you made a mistake in a competition? (say and do)

The next section we are going to talk about is misbehaving (either just yourself or as a team or group).
8. What would your ideal coach do for punishment in your practices? (Ex. Say that the team is not having a good practice)
9. Describe how your ideal coach keeps control of his/her players?
10. If something is happening between teammates (e.g., Kids fighting, arguing, shouting, pushing), what do you want your coach to do?
11. Do you think the ideal coach could yell at you/team in the right situation? (Yes, in what situation, No, why not?) Provide examples?

Getting to some general questions …
12. Can you describe to me a couple of things that an organized coach would do? How about an unorganized coach? (in terms of practices, games, team organization)
13. What sort of words/terms should your ideal coach say in practice specifically?
- what specific things should your head coach be responsible for every practice?

14. What sort of words/terms should your ideal coach say in competitions specifically?
- what specific things should your head coach be responsible for every during comp. periods?

15. How should a coach speak to you in general out of sport.
(what he says and how he says it, maybe what if you see him away from your sport what should they say) – ask about the tone, maybe words about chatting with athletes

16. Would you like your ideal coach to take an interest in your life outside of the sport? What do you think I mean by that? (Why/Why Not?)
17. Would you want your ideal coach to be someone that you can ask for help, talk to, or look up to (not sport related) and why?

18. Do you think you would have different preferences of a coach if you were playing in a team/individual sport? For example, if you were in a sport like hockey or volleyball, would you like your coach to do different things? For example, if you were in a sport like badminton or track and field, would you want your ideal coach to do different things?

19. To summarize, it is obvious that coaches play a major role in youth sport and in your life as an athlete. My final question summarizes anything you want to build on or add about your "ideal" coach. Is there anything else you would like to add?

This concludes the interview (Audio recording off).

H. Test of Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) for Gender

Test of Normality				
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov(α)		
	gender	Statistic	df	Sig.
Training and Instruction	boy	0.123	44	0.095
	girl	0.112	72	0.025
Democratic Behaviour	boy	0.153	44	0.011
	girl	0.112	72	0.027
Autocratic Behaviour	boy	0.213	44	0.000
	girl	0.241	72	0.000
Social Support	boy	0.111	44	.200*
	girl	0.12	72	0.012
Positive Feedback	boy	0.151	44	0.013
	girl	0.143	72	0.001

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

I. Test of Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) for Team/Individual

Test of Normality				
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov(α)		
	gender	Statistic	df	Sig.
TI	boy	0.123	44	0.095
	girl	0.112	72	0.025
DB	boy	0.153	44	0.011
	girl	0.112	72	0.027
AB	boy	0.213	44	0.000
	girl	0.241	72	0.000
SS	boy	0.111	44	.200*
	girl	0.12	72	0.012
PFB	boy	0.151	44	0.013
	girl	0.143	72	0.001

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Test of Normality				
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov(α)		
	gender	**Statistic**	**df**	**Sig.**
TI	individual	0.076	37	.200*
	team	0.118	79	0.008
DB	individual	0.126	37	0.143
	team	0.153	79	0.000
AB	individual	0.281	37	0.000
	team	0.201	79	0.000
SS	individual	0.118	37	.200*
	team	0.141	79	0.000
PFB	individual	0.138	37	0.073
	team	0.134	79	0.000

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction